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LITTLE MASTERPIECES OF  
ENGLISH POETRY













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**Little Masterpieces**

In Forty-four Volumes

**P O E T R Y**

Edited by  
**HENRY VAN DYKE**



VOLUME XXII

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## ODES, SONNETS, AND EPIGRAMS



## INTRODUCTION

ODES.—A study of the ode shows that since Spenser's time its form has rounded out a full cycle and returned to something like what it was in his and Milton's hands,—a dignified, eloquent, and organlike rather than lyrical strain of music whose stanzaic and metrical form is not prescribed by very strict laws. In the *Prothalamion* Spenser's stanzas are all eighteen lines in length and have a scheme of six rhymes which is approximately the same for each; in the *Epithalamion* he uses more freedom in varying the number of lines in a stanza and the method of the rhyme; in both poems there is the free variation of the number of stresses in a line which may be taken as characteristic of most English odes. These two poems show the two directions which the ode has taken,—the one an ode in regular stanzaic form bearing strongly in the direction of the lyric; the other a freely varying poem not songlike at all, but finding its kindred in the oration, the prayer, and the panegyric.

These two varieties are seen still more plainly in Milton's odes. The *Hymn on the Morning*

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*of Christ's Nativity* has a regular though complex stanza and is hymn-like, as its name implies. *At a Solemn Music* and *On Time* are fine examples of the freely varying ode. Rhythm and rhyme, not stanza and metre, are the harmonic principles. The rhythm is one of paragraph, as in the blank verse of the mature Shakespeare and in *Paradise Lost*. The line is lost sight of, its artificiality clearly demonstrated; the paragraph is the unit.

Ben Jonson's odes follow classical models, Latin as well as Greek. The *Pindaric Ode* in this volume shows his following of strophe, antistrophe, and epode after the manner of Pindar as he understood it. Not less interesting as regards form are his *Ode to Himself*, and several others where Horace, rather than Pindar, is the model. The only English ode on the Latin model which is universally recognized as a masterpiece is Marvell's stately and finely tempered *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*; that, however, because of other things than form. The period of the imitation of the classic ode produced, indeed, very little of value; the form was perhaps too artificial and the imitation so close as to be deadening. With this movement, however, is to be connected the famous mistake of Abraham Cowley which gave the world the anomaly known as the English Pindaric ode. Pindar was believed by Cowley (though we now know much better, and it seems Ben Jonson knew much better) to have written without regularity

## Introduction

of line or stanza. Cowley wrote rhyming odes after this supposed model, striving only to fit as nearly as he could the form to the sense. His lead was<sup>a</sup> followed by poets for more than a century, and his is still perhaps the prevailing popular notion of the ode. That is, a poem made up of irregular lines and strophes, beginning usually with a capital O. It was not so much of a discovery as Cowley doubtless thought it, as it is, after all, not far different from poems by Jonson, Donne, and Milton. Cowley's form fitted roughly the English ode-writing genius, and has been endowed with a heritage inferior to few forms in English poetic literature. Here Dryden wrote his best short poems, *Alexander's Feast* and *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, and another, *To the Pious Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew*, perhaps greater than either, but, unfortunately, not suited to our purpose. Gray, whose reserved and contemplative genius had in it much that is typical of the ode-writer, gave to the form its true influence, so strong upon the poets of his own and two succeeding generations. We have not included *The Bard*, fine as it is, in this collection, because Gray has there cast into this congenial mould inappropriate material.

Wordsworth and Coleridge, Shelley and Byron, all wrote odes of the irregular variety, each after his own age and his own genius. Added to this list are Bryant, Lowell, Coventry Patmore, and many others, and from them and some of our greater living poets we can find



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the contemporary conception of the ode as a form in English poetry, clear, well-defined, and vital. It is this conception which has prevented us from including a number of reflective lyrics in this collection. Many reflective lyrics are, if we take subject matter, melody, and emotional value as criteria, odes in everything but name. Much of Emerson and of Matthew Arnold, without any very serious wrench to either form or popular conception, might be classed as odes. We have not done violence to the form as the poets have conceived it.

A second division of the subject remains to be treated. Shelley's most famous odes are not the ode *To Liberty* and *To Venice*. They are *To a Skylark* and the *Ode to the West Wind*. In the first two he has written English odes in the approved form. In the second two the lyrical ode has made its most lyrical manifestation. They are, however, examples of the ode in regular stanzas which has been present in our poetry from the beginning. Keats, for example, seems to occupy a beautiful middle ground. His dignity and enthusiasm, his classic regularity of metre and evenness of line, give just the impression of the best English odes. It is the same end achieved by a different means. We have therefore included lyrical odes as well as pure odes in this collection.

**SONNETS.**—An arrangement by authors shows of itself all that is needful as regards the history of the sonnet in English. To the popular mind

## Introduction

the great divisions appear with the names of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. To my mind, there is quite as much community between Milton and Wordsworth as between Wordsworth and Rossetti, another of the great sonneteers in our literature. The likeness is probably more in matter and tone than in form; for, as has often been pointed out, Milton does not make the important division between the octave and sestet as Wordsworth and Rossetti do, and is thus the creator of a form quite distinct and separate.

These are, however, only three or four of the forms which the sonnet has taken in English. The English or Shakespearian sonnet, invented by Surrey, prevails, of course, throughout Elizabethan times; but, selected though it was with the certainty of genius as the best possible form, it is only one of the various sonnet-patterns of Elizabethan times. The Spenserian sonnet is the only respectable rival, but hardly a successful one; for the Spenserian form loses rather than gains in the linking of its octave by rhyme, since the sestet is left without corresponding organization. The hybrid form followed by Drummond was without noticeable effect on the development of the sonnet, and Milton, who returned to Italian models, is the sonneteer of the earlier time whose influence has been greatest.

In the great mass of sonnet literature of the nineteenth century the Petrarchan form has prevailed; but it is only fair to say that it has been used very freely. A sonnet is doubtless usually

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better when one of the recognized forms has been followed closely; but in making up this collection we have chosen such sonnets as we considered masterpieces, without questioning too narrowly their strict conformity to one model or another.

Milton and Wordsworth, following the lead of Shakespeare in a few of his sonnets, have wrought a far greater change in the sonnet than any mere change in form; for they have brought it about that the great body of sonnet-literature in English is no longer prevailingly amatory, as it was during the first great sonnet period. The sonnet has become a medium for the expression of lofty ideas concerning life, death, and destiny. The "soul-animating strains" of which Wordsworth speaks have sounded through its narrow compass. It has thus achieved an elevation, an impersonality, a purposeful dignity comparable to the ode. The juxtaposition of odes and sonnets in this volume will not therefore be found unfitting.

Such a collection as this may be found much too small; for if once you descend below the very highest level in Elizabethan literature, not to speak of nineteenth-century literature, you find yourself embarrassed and unable to choose, lost as you are in the profusion which surrounds you.

EPIGRAMS.—Room has also been found in this volume for a small collection of epigrams. We have not hunted them out very carefully, but

## Introduction

have taken only those which forced themselves upon our attention as we looked for more important forms. There is no great stock of epigrams in English, mainly because our great epigrammatists did not leave their epigrams, as rounded pebbles, loose in the field of literature, but made them into great conglomerates of rhyming couplets, like *Mac Flecknoe* and the *Essay on Man*. This collection has no very strict basal principle; it is chosen by feeling, and many of the bits here would not fulfil the narrow requirements as to wit, or paronomasia, laid down by writers on this subject. They are, however, delicately finished little poems whose appeal is usually intellectual rather than emotional; they emphasize, set off, or indicate a relationship in the world of thought. Their unity is absolute, their point keen, their emphasis intense.

In each of the collections which this volume contains one is struck as much by the names which do not appear as by those which do. Some of the greatest poets have not been ode-writers, or sonneteers, or epigrammatists.

HARDIN CRAIG.



ODES



## PROTHALAMION

**C**ALME was the day, and through the trembling  
ayre

Sweete-breathing Zephyrus did softly play  
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay  
Hot Titans beames, which then did glyster  
fayre;

When I, (whom sullein care,  
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay  
In Princes Court, and expectation vayne  
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,  
Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my brayne,)  
Walkt forth to ease my payne  
Along the shoare of silver streaming Themmes;  
Whose ruttie Bancke, the which his River  
hemmes,

Was paynted all with variable flowers,  
And all the meades adornd with daintie  
gemmes

Fit to decke maydens bowres,  
And crowne their Paramours  
Against the Brydale day, which is not long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end  
my Song.

18



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There, in a Meadow, by the Rivers side,  
A Flocke of Nymphes I chauncèd to espy,  
All lovely Daughters of the Flood thereby,  
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untyde,  
As each had bene a Bryde;  
And each one had a little wicker basket,  
Made of fine twigs, entraylèd curiously,  
In which they gathered flowers to fill their  
flasket,  
And with fine Fingers cropt full feateously  
The tender stalkes on hyc.  
Of every sort, which in that Meadow grew,  
They gathered some; the Violet, pallid blew,  
The little Dazie, that at evening closes,  
The virgin Lillie, and the Primrose trew,  
With store of vermeil Roses,  
To decke their Bridegromes posies  
Against the Brydale day, which was not long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end  
my Song. 36

With that I saw two Swannes of goodly hewe  
Come softly swimming downe along the Lee;  
Two fairer Birds I yet did never see;  
The snow, which doth the top of Pindus  
strew,  
Did never whiter shew,  
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a Swan would be,  
For love of Leda, whiter did appeare;  
Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,  
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare;  
So purely white they were,

## Prothalamion

That even the gentle streame, the which them  
bare,

Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes  
spare

To wet their silken feathers, least they might  
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so  
fayre,

And marre their beauties bright,

That shone as heavens light,

Against their Brydale day, which was not  
long :

Sweete Themmes ! runne softly, till I end  
my Song.

54

Eftsoones the Nymphes, which now had Flow-  
ers their fill,

Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,

As they came floating on the Christal Flood ;

Whom when they sawe, they stood amazèd still,  
Their wondring eyes to fill ;

Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fayre,

Of Fowles, so lovely, that they sure did deeme

Them heavenly borne, or to be that same payre

Which through the Skie draw Venus silver

Teeme ;

For sure they did not seeme

To be begot of any earthly Seede,

But rather Angels, or of Angels breede ;

Yet were they bred of Somers-heat, they say,

In sweetest Season, when each Flower and  
weede

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The earth did fresh aray ;  
So fresh they seem'd as day,  
Even as their Brydale day, which was not  
long :  
Sweete Themmes ! runne softly, till I end  
my Song.

72

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew  
Great store of Flowers, the honour of the field,  
That to the sense did fragrant odours yeild,  
All which upon those goodly Birds they threw  
And all the Waves did strew,  
That like old Peneus Waters they did seeme,  
When downe along by pleasant Tempes shore,  
Scattered with Flowres, through Thessaly they  
streeme,  
That they appeare, through Lillies plenteous  
store,  
Like a Brydes Chamber flore.  
Two of those Nymphes, meane while, two Gar-  
lands bound  
Of freshest Flowres which in that Mead they  
found,  
The which presenting all in trim Array,  
Their snowie Foreheads therewithall they  
crownd,  
Whil'st one did sing this Lay,  
Prepar'd against that Day,  
Against their Brydale day, which was not long :  
Sweete Themmes ! runne softly, till I end  
my Song.

90

## Prothalamion

“Ye gentle Birdes! the worlds faire ornament,  
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower  
Doth leade unto your lovers blisfull bower,  
Joy may you have, and gentle hearts content  
Of your loves couplement;  
And let faire Venus, that is Queene of love,  
With her heart-quelling Sonne upon you smile,  
Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove  
All Loves dislike, and friendships faultie guile  
For ever to assoile.  
Let endlesse Peace your steadfast hearts  
accord,  
And blessed Plentie wait upon your bord;  
And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,  
That fruitfull issue may to you afford,  
Which may your foes confound,  
And make your joyes redound  
Upon your Brydale day, which is not long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softlie, till I end  
my Song.”

108

So ended she; and all the rest around  
To her redoubled that her undersong,  
Which said their brydale daye should not be  
long:  
And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground  
Their accents did resound.  
So forth those joyous Birdes did passe along,  
Adowne the Lee, that to them murmurde low,  
As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,  
Yet did by signes his glad affection show,  
Making his streame run slow.

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*And all the foule which in his flood did dwell*  
Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell  
The rest, so far as Cynthia doth shend  
The lesser starres. So they, enrangéd well,  
Did on those two attend,  
And their best service lend  
Against their wedding day, which was not  
long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end  
my Song.

126

At length they all to mery London came,  
To mery London, my most kyndly Nurse,  
That to me gave this Lifes first native source,  
Though from another place I take my name,  
An house of auncient fame:  
There when they came, whereas those bricky  
towres  
The which on Themmes brode agèd backe doe  
ryde,  
Where now the studious Lawyers have their  
bowers,  
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to  
byde,  
Till they decayd through pride:  
Next whereunto there standes a stately place,  
Where oft I gaynèd giftes and goodly grace  
Of that great Lord, which therein wont to  
dwell,  
Whose want too well now feeles my freendles  
case;

## Prothalamion

*But ah! here fits not well*  
Olde woes, but joyes, to tell  
Against the bridale daye, which is not long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end  
my Song. 144

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble Peer,  
Great Englands glory, and the Worlds wide  
wonder,  
Whose dreadfull name late through all Spaine  
did thunder,  
And Hercules two pillors standing neere  
Did make to quake and feare:  
Faire branch of Honor, flower of Chevalrie!  
That fillest England with thy triumphes  
fame,  
Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,  
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name  
That promiseth the same;  
That through thy prowesse, and victorious  
armes,  
Thy country may be freed from forraine  
harmes;  
And great Elisaes glorious name may ring  
Through al the world, fil'd with thy wide  
Alarmes,  
Which some brave muse may sing  
To ages following,  
Upon the Brydale day, which is not long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end  
my Song. 162

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From those high Towers this noble Lord  
issuing,  
Like Radiant Hesper, when his golden hayre  
In th' Ocean billowes he hath bathèd tayre,  
Descended to the Rivers open vewing,  
With a great traine ensuing.  
Above the rest were goodly to bee seene  
Two gentle Knights of lovely face and feature,  
Beseeming well the bower of anie Queene,  
With gifts of wit, and ornaments of nature,  
Fit for so goodly stature,  
That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in  
sight,  
Which decke the Bauldricke of the Heavens  
bright;  
They two, forth pacing to the Rivers side,  
Received those two faire Brides, their Loves  
delight;  
Which, at th' appointed tyde,  
Each one did make his Bryde  
Against their Brydale day, which is not long:  
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end  
my Song.

180

1596.

*Edmund Spenser.*

## EPITHALAMION

YE learnèd sisters, which have oftentimes  
Beene to me ayding, others to adorne,  
Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull  
rymes,

## Epithalamion

That even the greatest did not greatly scorne  
To heare theyr names sung in your simple  
    layes,  
But joyèd in their praise;  
And when ye list your owne mishaps to  
    mourne,  
Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck did  
    rayse,  
Your string could soone to sadder tenor turne,  
And teach the woods and waters to lament  
Your dolefull dreriment:  
Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside;  
And, having all your heads with girlands  
    crownd,  
Helpe me mine owne loves prayses to resound;  
Ne let the same of any be envide:  
So Orpheus did for his owne bride!  
So I unto my selfe alone will sing;  
The woods shall to me answer, and my Eccho  
    ring. 18

Early, before the worlds light-giving lampe  
His golden beame upon the hils doth spred,  
Having disperst the nights unchearefull dampe,  
Doe ye awake; and, with fresh lusty-hed,  
Go to the bowre of my belovèd love,  
My truest turtle dove;  
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,  
And long since ready forth his maske to move,  
With his bright Tead that flames with many  
    a flake,



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And many a bachelor to waite'on him,  
In theyr fresh garments trim.  
Bid her awake therefore, and soone her dight,  
For lo! the wished day is come at last, '  
That shall, for all the paynes and sorrowes  
past,  
Pay to her usury of long delight:  
And, whylest she doth her dight,  
Doe ye to her of joy and solace sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your  
eccho ring.

36

Bring with you all the Nymphes that you can  
heare  
Both of the rivers and the forrests greene,  
And of the sea that neighbours to her neare:  
Al with gay girlands goodly wel beseene.  
And let them also with them bring in hand  
Another gay girland  
For my fayre love, of lillyes and of roses,  
Bound truelove wize, with a blew silke riband.  
And let them make great store of bridale poses,  
And let them eeke bring store of other flowers,  
To deck the bridale bowers.  
And let the ground whereas her foot shall  
tread,  
For feare the stones her tender foot should  
wrong,  
Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,  
And diapred lyke the discolored mead.  
Which done, doe at her chamber dore awayt,  
For she will waken strayt;

## Epithalamion

The whiles doe ye this song unto her sing,  
The woods shall to you answer, and your  
Eccho ring. 55

•  
Ye Nymphes of Mulla, which with carefull heed  
The silver scaly trouts doe tend full well,  
And greedy pikes which use therein to feed;  
(Those trouts and pikes all others doo excell;)  
And ye likewise, which keepe the rushy lake,  
Where none doo fishes take;  
Bynd up the locks the which hang scatterd  
light,  
And in his waters, which your mirror make,  
Behold your faces as the christall bright,  
That when you come whereas my love doth lie,  
No blemish she may spie.  
And eke, ye lightfoot mayds, which keepe the  
deere,  
That on the hoary mountayne used to towre;  
And the wylde wolves, which seeke them to  
devoure,  
With your steele darts doo chace from com-  
ming neer;  
Be also present heere,  
To helpe to decke her, and to help to sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your  
eccho ring. 73

Wake now, my love, awake! for it is time;  
The Rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,  
All ready to her silver coche to clyme;  
And Phœbus gins to shew his glorious hed.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Hark! how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr  
laies

And carroll of Loves praise.

The merry Larke hir mattins sings aloft;  
The Thrush replyes; the Mavis descant playes;  
The Ouzell shrills; the Ruddock warbles soft;  
So goodly all agree, with sweet consent,  
To this dayes merriment.

Ah! my deere love, why doe ye sleepe thus  
long?

When meeter were that ye should now awake,  
T' awayt the comming of your joyous make,  
And hearken to the birds love-learnèd song,  
The deawy leaves among!

Nor they of joy and pleasance to you sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and theyr  
eccho ring.

91

My love is now awake out of her dreames,  
And her fayre eyes, like stars that dimmèd  
were

With darksome cloud, now shew theyr goodly  
beams

More bright then Hesperus his head doth rere.  
Come now, ye damzels, daughters of delight,  
Helpe quickly her to dight:

But first come ye fayre houres, which were  
begot

In Joves sweet paradise of Day and Night;  
Which doe the seasons of the yeare allot,  
And al, that ever in this world is fayre,  
Doe make and still repayre:

## Epithalamion

And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian  
Queene,  
The which doe still adorne her beauties pride,  
Helpe, to addorne my beautifullest bride:  
And, as ye her array, still throw betweene  
Some graces to be seene;  
And, as ye use to Venus, to her sing,  
The whiles the woods shal answer, and your  
eccho ring. 109

Now is my love all ready forth to come:  
Let all the virgins therefore well awayt:  
And ye fresh boyes, that tend upon her groome,  
Prepare your selves; for he is comming strayt.  
Set all your things in seemely good aray,  
Fit for so joyfull day:  
The joyfulst day that ever sunne did see.  
Faure Sun! shew forth thy favourable ray,  
And let thy lifull heat not fervent be,  
For feare of burning her sunshyny face,  
Her beauty to disgrace.  
O fayrest Phœbus! father of the Muse!  
If ever I did honour thee aright,  
Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,  
Doe not thy servants simple boone refuse;  
But let this day, let this one day, be myne;  
Let all the rest be thine.  
Then I thy soverayne prayses loud wil sing,  
That all the woods shal answer, and theyr  
eccho ring. 128

Harke! how the Minstrils gin to shrill aloud  
Their merry Musick that resounds from far,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling Croud,  
That well agree withouten breach or jar.  
But, most of all, the Damzels doe delite  
When they their tymbrels smyte,  
And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,  
That all the sences they doe ravish quite;  
The whyles the boyes run up and downe the  
street,  
Crying aloud with strong confusèd noyce,  
As if it were one voyce,  
Hymen, iö Hymen, Hymen, they do shout;  
That even to the heavens theyr shouting shrill  
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;  
To which the people standing all about,  
As in approvance, doe thereto applaud,  
And loud advaunce her laud;  
And evermore they Hymen, Hymen sing,  
That al the woods them answer, and theyr  
eccho ring.

147

Loe! where she comes along with portly pace,  
Lyke Phoebe, from her chamber of the East,  
Arysing forth to run her mighty race,  
Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.  
So well it her beseemes, that ye would weene  
Some angell she had beene.  
Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,  
Sprinkled with perle, and perling flowres  
atweene,  
Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre;  
And, being crownèd with a girland greene,  
Seeme lyke some mayden Queene.

## Epithalamion

Her modest eyes, abashèd to behold  
So many gazers as on her do stare,  
Upon the lowly ground affixèd are;  
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,  
But blush to heare her prayses sung so loud,  
So farre from being proud.  
Nathlesse doe ye still loud her prayses sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your  
eccho ring. 166

Tell me, ye merchants daughters, did ye see  
So fayre a creature in your towne before;  
So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,  
Adornd with beautyes grace and vertues  
store?  
Her goodly eyes lyke Saphyres shining bright,  
Her forehead yvory white,  
Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath  
rudded,  
Her lips lyke cherries charming men to byte,  
Her brest like to a bowle of creame uncrudded,  
Her paps lyke lylies budded,  
Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre;  
And all her body like a pallace fayre,  
Ascending up, with many a stately stayre,  
To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.  
Why stand ye still ye virgins in amaze,  
Upon her so to gaze,  
Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,  
To which the woods did answer, and your  
eccho ring? 184

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,  
The inward beauty of her lively spright,  
Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree,  
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,  
And stand astonisht lyke to those which red  
Medusaes mazeful hed.

There dwels sweet love, and constant chastity,  
Unspotted fayth, and comely womanhood,  
Regard of honour, and mild modesty;  
There vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne,  
And giveth lawes alone,

The which the base affections doe obay,  
And yeeld theyr services unto her will;  
Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may  
Thereto approch to tempt her mind to ill.

Had ye once seene these her celestial  
treasures,

And unrevealèd pleasures,

Then would ye wonder, and her prayses sing,  
That al the woods should answer, and your  
echo ring.

203

Open the temple gates unto my love,  
Open them wide that she may enter in,  
And all the postes adorne as doth behove,  
And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,  
For to receyve this Saynt with honour dew,  
That commeth in to you.

With trembling steps, and humble reverence,  
She commeth in, before th' Almightyes view;  
Of her ye virgins learne obedience,

## Epithalamion

When so ye come into those holy places,  
To humble your proud faces:  
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may  
The sacred ceremonies there partake,  
The which do endlesse matrimony make;  
And let the roring Organs loudly play  
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;  
The whiles, with hollow throates,  
The Choristers the joyous Antheme sing,  
That al the woods may answere, and their  
eccho ring.

222

Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,  
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,  
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,  
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,  
And the pure snow, with goodly vermill  
stayne  
Like crimsin dyde in grayne:  
That even th' Angels, which continually  
About the sacred Altare doe remaine,  
Forget their service and about her fly,  
Ofte peeping in her face, that seems more fayre,  
The more they on it stare.  
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
Are governèd with goodly modesty,  
That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,  
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.  
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,  
The pledge of all our band!  
Sing, ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,  
That all the woods may answere and your  
eccho ring.

241



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Now al is done: bring home the bride again;  
Bring home the triumph of our victory:  
Bring home with you the glory of her gaine;  
With joyance bring her and with jollity.  
Never had man more joyfull day then this,  
Whom heaven would heape with blis,  
Make feast therefore now all this live-long  
day;

This day for ever to me holy is.  
Poure out the wine without restraint or stay,  
Poure not by cups, but by the belly full,  
Poure out to all that wull,  
And sprinkle all the postes and wals with wine,  
That they may sweat, and drunken be withall.  
Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,  
And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of  
vine;

And let the Graces daunce unto the rest,  
For they can doo it best:  
The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll sing,  
To which the woods shall answer, and theyr  
eccho ring. 260

Ring ye the bells, ye yong men of the towne,  
And leave your wonted labors for this day:  
This day is holy; doe ye write it downe,  
That ye for ever it remember may.  
This day the sunne is in his chieftest hight,  
With Barnaby the bright,  
From whence declining daily by degrees,  
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,  
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.

## Epithalamion

But for this time it ill ordainèd was,  
To chose the longest day in all the yeare,  
And shortest night, when longest fitter weare:  
Yet never day so long, but late would passe.  
Ring ye the bells, to make it weare away,  
And bonefiers make all day;  
And daunce about them, and about them sing,  
That all the woods may answer, and your  
eccho ring. 277

Ah! when will this long weary day have end,  
And lende me leave to come unto my love?  
How slowly do the houres theyr numbers  
spend?  
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move?  
Hast thee, O fayrest Planet, to thy home,  
Within the Westernne fome:  
Thy tyrèd steedes long since have need of rest.  
Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,  
And the bright evening-star with golden creast  
Apppeare out of the East.  
Fayre childe of beauty! glorious lampe of love!  
That all the host of heaven in rankes doost  
lead,  
And guydest lovers through the nights sad  
dread,  
How chearefully thou lookest from above,  
And seemst to laugh atweene thy twinkling  
light,  
As joying in the sight  
Of these glad many, which for joy doe sing,  
That all the woods them answer, and their  
echo ring! 295

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Now cease, ye damsels, your delights fore-  
past;

Enough it is that all the day was yours:  
Now day is done, and night is nighing fast,  
Now bring the Bryde into the brydall boures.

The night is come, now soon her disaray,  
And in her bed her lay;

Lay her in lillies and in violets,  
And silken courteins over her display,  
And odour'd sheetes, and Arras coverlets.  
Behold how goodly my faire love does ly,  
In proud humility!

Like unto Maia, when as Jove her took  
In Tempe, lying on the flowry gras,  
Twixt sleepe and wake, after she weary was,  
With bathing in the Acidalian brooke.

Now it is night, ye damsels may be gon,  
And leave my love alone,  
And leave likewise your former lay to sing:  
The woods no more shall answere, nor your  
echo ring.

314

Now welcome, night! thou night so long  
expected,  
That long daies labour doest at last defray,  
And all my cares, which cruell Love collected,  
Hast sumd in one, and cancellèd for aye:  
Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,  
That no man may us see;  
And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,  
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.  
Let no false treason seeke us to entrap,

## Epithalamion

Nor any dread disquiet once annoy  
The safety of our joy;  
But let the night be calme, and quietsome,  
Without tempestuous storms or sad afay:  
Lyke as when Jove with fayre Alcmena lay,  
When he begot the great Tirynthian groome:  
Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie  
And begot Majesty.  
And let the mayds and yong men cease to  
sing;  
Ne let the woods them answer nor theyr  
eccho ring.

333

Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull teares,  
Be heard all night within, nor yet without:  
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden feares,  
Breake gentle sleepe with misconceivèd dout.  
Let no deluding dreames, nor dreadfull sights,  
Make sudden sad affrights;  
Ne let house-fyres, nor lightnings helpelesse  
harmes,  
Ne let the Pouke, nor other evill sprights,  
Ne let mischivous witches with theyr charmes,  
Ne let hob Goblins, names whose sence we see  
not,  
Fray us with things that be not:  
Let not the shriech Oule nor the Storke be  
heard,  
Nor the night Raven, that still deadly yels;  
Nor damnèd ghosts, cald up with mighty spels,  
Nor griesly vultures, make us once affeard:

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Ne let th' unpleasant Quayre of Frogs still  
croking

Make us to wish theyr choking.

Let none of these theyr drery accents sing;

Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr  
eccho ring.

352

But let stil Silence trew night-watches keepe,  
That sacred Peace may in assurance rayne,  
And tymely Sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,  
May poure his limbs forth on your pleasant  
playne;

The whiles an hundred little wingèd loves,  
Like divers-fethered doves,  
Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,  
And in the secret darke, that none reproves,  
Their prety stealthes shal worke, and snares  
shal spread

To filch away sweet snatches of delight,  
Conceald through covert night.

Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will!  
For greedy pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,  
Thinks more upon her paradise of joyes,  
Then what ye do, albe it good or ill.

All night therefore attend your merry play,  
For it will soone be day:

Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing;  
Ne will the woods now answer, nor your  
Eccho ring.

371

Who is the same, which at my window peepes?  
Or whose is that faire face that shines so  
bright?

## Epithalamion

Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepes,  
But walkes about high heaven al the night?  
O! fayrest goddesse, do thou not envy  
My love with me to spy:  
For thou likewise didst love, though now  
    unthought,  
And for a fleece of wooll, which privily  
The Latmian shepherd once unto thee brought,  
His pleasures with thee wrought.  
Therefore to us be favorable now;  
And sith of wemens labours thou hast charge,  
And generation goodly dost enlarge,  
Encline thy will t' effect our wishfull vow,  
And the chaste wombe informe with timely  
    seed,  
That may our comfort breed:  
Till which we cease our hopefull hap to sing;  
Ne let the woods us answere, nor our Eccho  
    ring. 389

And thou, great Juno! which with awful  
    might  
The lawes of wedlock still dost patronize;  
And the religion of the faith first plight  
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize;  
And eeke for comfort often callèd art  
Of women in their smart;  
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,  
And all thy blessings unto us impart.  
And thou, glad Genius! in whose gentle hand  
The bridale bowre and geniall bed remaine,  
Without blemish or staine;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And the sweet pleasures of theyr loves delight  
With secret ayde doest succor and supply,  
Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny;  
Send us the timely fruit of this same night.  
And thou, fayre Hebe! and thou, Hymen free!  
Grant that it may so be.

Til which we cease your further prayse to  
sing;

Ne any woods shall answer, nor your Eccho  
ring. 408

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,  
In which a thousand torches flaming bright  
Doe burne, that to us wretched earthly clods  
In dreadful darknesse lend desired light;  
And all ye powers which in the same remayne,  
More then we men can fayne!

Poure out your blessing on us plentiously,  
And happy influence upon us raine,  
That we may raise a large posterity,  
Which from the earth, which they may long  
possesse

With lasting happinesse,  
Up to your haughty pallaces may mount;  
And, for the guerdon of theyr glorious merit,  
May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,  
Of blessed Saints for to increase the count.

So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,  
And cease till then our tymely joyes to sing:  
The woods no more us answer, nor our eccho  
ring! 426

## A Pindaric Ode

*Song! made in lieu of many ornaments,  
With which my love should duly have been  
    dedt,  
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,  
Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,  
But promist both to recompens;  
Be unto her a goodly ornament,  
And for short time an endlesse monument. 433*  
1595. *Edmund Spenser.*

## A PINDARIC ODE

### ON THE DEATH OF SIR H. MORISON

Brave infant of Saguntum, clear  
Thy coming forth in that great year,  
When the prodigious Hannibal did crown  
His rage, with razing your immortal town.  
    Thou looking then about,  
    Ere thou wert half got out,  
Wise child, didst hastily return,  
And mad'st thy mother's womb thine urn.  
How summed a circle didst thou leave mankind  
Of deepest lore, could we the centre find! 10

Did wiser nature draw thee back,  
From out the horror of that sack;  
Where shame, faith, honour, and regard of right,  
Lay trampled on? the deeds of death and night,  
    Urged, hurried forth, and hurled  
    Upon th' affrighted world;



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Sword, fire, and famine with fell fury met,  
And all on utmost ruin set:  
As, could they but life's miseries foresee,  
No doubt all infants would return like thee. 20

For what is life, if measured by the space,  
Not by the act?  
Or masked man, if valued by his face,  
Above his fact?  
Here 's one outlived his peers,  
And told forth fourscore years:  
He vexed time, and busied the whole state;  
Troubled both foes and friends;  
But ever to no ends:  
What did this stirrer but die late?  
How well at twenty had he fallen or stood!  
For three of his fourscore he did no good. 32

He entered well by virtuous parts,  
Got up, and thrived with honest arts;  
He purchased friends, and fame, and honours  
then,  
And had his noble name advanced with men:  
But weary of that flight,  
He stooped in all men's sight  
To sordid flatteries, acts of strife,  
And sunk in that dead sea of life,  
So deep, as he did then death's waters sup,  
But that the cork of title buoyed him up. 42

Alas! but Morison fell young:  
He never fell,—thou fall'st, my tongue.

## A Pindaric Ode

He stood a soldier to the last right end.

A perfect patriot, and a noble friend;

But most a virtuous son.

All offices were done

By him, so ample, full, and round,

In weight, in measure, number, sound,

As, though his age imperfect might appear,

His life was of humanity the sphere. 52

Go now, and tell our days summed up with fears,

And make them years;

Produce thy mass of miseries on the stage,

• To swell thine age:

Repeat of things a throng,

To shew thou hast been long,

Not lived; for life doth her great actions  
spell,

By what was done and wrought

In season, and so brought

To light: her measures are, how well

Each syllable answered, and was formed, how  
fair;

These make the lines of life, and that 's her  
air! 64

It is not growing like a tree

In bulk, doth make man better be;

Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,

To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:

A lily of a day,

Is fairer far, in May,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Although it fall and die that night;  
It was the plant and flower of light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see;  
And in short measures life may perfect be. 74

Call, noble *Lucius*, then for wine,  
And let thy looks with gladness shine:  
Accept this Garland, plant it on thy head,  
And think, nay know, thy *Morison's* not dead.  
He leaped the present age,  
Possessed with holy rage,  
To see that bright eternal day;  
Of which we priests and poets say  
Such truths as we expect for happy men:  
And there he lives with memory and *Ben* 84

*Jonson*, who sung this of him, ere he went,  
Himself, to rest,  
Or taste a part of that full joy he meant  
To have exprest,  
In this bright asterism!—  
Where it were friendship's schism,  
Were not his *Lucius* long with us to tarry,  
To separate these two-  
Lights, the *Dioscouri*,  
And keep the one half from his *Harry*.  
But fate doth so alternate the design,  
Whilst that in Heaven, this light on earth must  
shine,— 96

And shine as you exalted are;  
Two names of friendship, but one star:

## A Pindaric Ode

Of hearts the union, and those not by chance  
Made, or indenture, or leased out t' advance  
    The profits for a time.  
    No pleasures vain did chime,  
    Of rhymes, or riots, at your feasts,  
    Orgies of drink, or feigned protests:  
But simple love of greatness and of good,  
That knits brave minds and manners more than  
    blood. 106

This made you first to know the *why*  
    *You liked*, then after, to apply  
That liking; and approach so one the t'other  
Till either grew a portion of the other:  
    Each stylèd by his end,  
    The copy of his friend.  
You lived to be the great sir-names,  
And titles, by which all made claims  
Unto the Virtue: nothing perfect done,  
But as a *CARY*, or a *MORISON*. 116

And such the force the fair example had,  
    As they that saw  
The good, and durst not practise it were glad  
    That such a law  
    Was left yet to mankind;  
    Where they might read and find  
FRIENDSHIP, indeed, was written not in  
    words;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And with the heart, not pen,  
Of two so early men,  
Whose lines her rolls were, and records:  
Who, ere the first down bloomèd on the chin,  
Had sowed these fruits, and got the harvest  
in. 128

1629. 1640. *Ben Jonson.*

### ODE ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

THIS is the month, and this the happy morn  
Wherein the Son of Heaven's Eternal King  
Of wedded maid and virgin mother born,  
Our great redemption from above did bring;  
For so the holy sages once did sing,  
That he our deadly forfeit should release,  
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace. 7

That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable,  
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,  
Wherewith he wont at Heaven's high council-  
table  
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,  
He laid aside; and here with us to be,  
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,  
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal  
clay. 14

## Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity

Say heavenly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein  
Afford a present to the Infant God?  
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain  
To welcome him to this new abode;  
Now while the heaven, by the sun's team untrod,  
Hath took no print of the approaching light,  
And all the spangled host keep watch in  
squadrons bright? 21

See how from far, upon the eastern road,  
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet:  
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,  
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;  
Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,  
And join thy voice unto the angel quire,  
From out his secret altar touch'd with hallow'd  
fire. 28

### THE HYMN

It was the winter wild  
While the heaven-born Child  
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;  
Nature in awe to him  
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize:  
It was no season then for her  
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour. 36

Only with speeches fair  
She woos the gentle air  
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And on her naked shame,  
Pollute with sinful blame,

The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;  
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes  
Should look so near upon her foul de-  
formities.

41

But he, her fears to cease,  
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;

She, crown'd with olive green, came softly  
sliding  
Down through the turning sphere  
His ready harbinger,  
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;  
And waving wide her myrtle wand,  
She strikes a universal peace through sea and  
land.

52

No war, or battle's sound  
Was heard the world around:

The idle spear and shield were high up hung;  
The hookéd chariot stood  
Unstain'd with hostile blood;

The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng;  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord  
was by.

60

But peaceful was the night  
Wherein the Prince of Light

His reign of peace upon the earth began:

## Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity

The winds, with wonder whist, '  
Smoothly the waters kist

Whispering new joys to the mild ocean—  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the  
    charméd wave.

68

The stars, with deep amaze,  
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,

Bending one way their precious influence;  
And will not take their flight  
For all the morning light,

Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;  
But in their glimmering orbs did glow  
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them  
    go.

76

And though the shady gloom  
Had given day her room,

The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,  
And hid his head for shame,  
As his inferior flame

The new-enlighten'd world no more should  
    need;

He saw a greater Sun appear  
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree  
    could bear.

84

The shepherds on the lawn,  
Or ere the point of dawn,

Sate simply chatting in a rustic row;



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Full little thought they than  
That the mighty Pan

Was kindly come to live with them below;  
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,  
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy  
keep.

92

When such music sweet  
Their hearts and ears did greet,  
As never was by mortal finger strook—  
Divinely-warbled voice  
Answering the stringéd noise,

As all their souls in blissful rapture took:  
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,  
With thousand echoes still prolongs each hea-  
venly close.

100

Nature that heard such sound  
Beneath the hollow round

Of Cynthia's seat the airy region thrilling,  
Now was almost won  
To think her part was done,  
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;  
She knew such harmony alone  
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier  
union.

108

At last surrounds their sight  
A globe of circular light,

That with long beams the shamefaced night  
array'd;

## Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity

The helméd Cherubim  
And sworded Seraphim

Are seen in glittering ranks with wings  
display'd,  
Harping in loud and solemn quire  
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born  
'Heir. 116

Such music (as 't is said)  
Before was never made  
But when of old the sons of morning sung,  
While the Creator great  
His constellations set  
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;  
And cast the dark foundations deep,  
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel  
keep. 124

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!  
Once bless our human ears,  
(If ye have power to touch our senses so)  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time;  
And let the base of heaven's deep organ blow;  
And with your ninefold harmony  
Make up full consort to th' angelic symphony. 132

For if such holy song  
Enwrap our fancy long,  
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And speckled vanity  
Will sicken soon and die,  
    And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould;  
And Hell itself will pass away,  
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering  
    day. 140

Yea, Truth and Justice then  
Will down return to men,  
    Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,  
Mercy will sit between  
Throned in celestial sheen,  
    With radiant feet the tissued clouds down  
    steering; 141  
And Heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace  
    hall. 148

But wisest Fate says no;  
This must not yet be so,  
    The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy  
That on the bitter cross  
Must redeem our loss;  
    So both himself and us to glorify:  
Yet first to those ychain'd in sleep,  
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder  
    through the deep. 156

With such a horrid clang  
As on mount Sinai rang  
    While the red fire and smoldering clouds  
    outbrake:

## Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity

The aged Earth aghast  
With terror of that blast

Shall from the surface to the centre shake,  
When, at the world's last session,  
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread  
his throne. 164

And then at last our bliss  
Full and perfect is,

But now begins; for from this happy day  
Th' old Dragon under ground  
In straiter limits bound,  
Not half so far casts his usurpéd sway;  
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,  
Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail. 172

The oracles are dumb;  
No voice or hideous hum

Runs through the archéd roof in words  
deceiving:  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine,  
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos  
leaving:  
No nightly trance, or breathéd spell,  
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic  
cell. 180

The lonely mountains o'er  
And the resounding shore  
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

From haunted spring, and dale  
Edged with poplar pale,  
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;  
With flower-inwoven tresses torn  
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets  
mourn. 188

In consecrated earth,  
And on the holy hearth,  
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight  
plaint;  
In urns, and altars round  
A drear and dying sound  
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint;  
And the chill marble seems to sweat,  
While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted  
seat. 196

Peor and Baalim  
Forsake their temples dim,  
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine;  
And moonéd Ashtaroth,  
Heaven's queen and mother both,  
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine;  
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,  
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded  
Thammuz mourn. 204

And sullen Moloch fled,  
Hath left in shadows dread  
His burning idol all of blackest hue;

## Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity

In vain with cymbals' ring

They call the grisly king,

In dismal dance about the furnace blue;

The brutish gods of Nile as fast,

Isis and Orus, and the dog Anubis haste. 212

Nor is Osiris seen

In Memphian grove, or green,

Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings  
loud:

Nor can he be at rest

Within his sacred chest;

Naught but profoundest hell can be his shroud;

In vain with timbrell'd anthems dark

The sable-stoléd sorcerers bear his worshipt  
ark. 220

He feels from Juda's land

The dreaded infant's hand;

The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;

Nor all the gods beside

Longer dare abide,

Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:

Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,

Can in his swaddling bands control the damnéd  
crew. 228

So when the sun in bed,

Curtain'd with cloudy red,

Pillows his chin upon an orient wave;

The flocking shadows pale

Troop to th' infernal jail,

Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And the yellow-skirted fays  
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-  
loved maze. 236

But see, the Virgin blest  
Hath laid her Babe to rest ;  
Time is our tedious song should here have  
ending :  
Heaven's youngest-teeméd star  
Hath fixed her polish'd car,  
Her sleeping Lord with hand-maid lamp  
attending :  
And all about the courtly stable  
Bright-harness'd angels sit in order  
serviceable. 244

1629. 1645.

*John Milton.*

## ON TIME

FLY envious Time, till thou run out thy race,  
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,  
Whose speed is but the heavy plummets pace ;  
And glut thy self with what thy womb devours,  
Which is no more then what is false and vain,  
And meerly mortal dross ;  
So little is our loss,  
So little is thy gain.  
For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,  
And last of all, thy greedy self consum'd, 10

## At a Solemn Music

Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss  
With an individual kiss;  
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;  
When every thing that is sincerely good  
And perfectly divine,  
With Truth, and Peace, and Love shall ever  
shine  
About the supreme Throne  
Of him, t' whose happy-making sight alone,  
When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall clime,  
Then all this earthy grossness quit, 20  
Attir'd with stars, we shall for ever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and  
thee O Time.

1645.

*John Milton.*

## AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,  
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,  
Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ  
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce,  
And to our high-raised phantasy present  
That undisturbèd Song of pure content,  
Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne  
To Him that sits thereon  
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee,  
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row 10  
Their loud up-lifted angel trumpets blow;  
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

With those just Spirits that wear victorious  
    palms,  
    Hymns devout and holy psalms  
    Singing everlastingly ;  
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice  
May rightly answer that melodious noise ;  
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin  
Jarr'd against nature's chime, and with harsh  
    din 20  
Broke the fair music that all creatures made  
To their great Lord, whose love their motion  
    sway'd  
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood  
In first obedience, and their state of good.  
O may we soon again renew that Song,  
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long  
To his celestial concert us unite,  
To live with him, and sing in endless morn of  
    light !

1645.

*John Milton.*

## AN HORATIAN ODE

### UPON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND

THE forward youth that would appear  
Must now forsake his Muses dear,  
    Nor in the shadows sing  
    His numbers languishing.

## An Horatian Ode

'T is time to leave the books in dust,  
And oil the unused armour's rust,  
    Removing from the wall  
    The corslet of the hall. 8

So restless Cromwell could not cease  
In the inglorious arts of peace,  
    But through adventurous war  
    Urgèd his active star: 12

And like the three-fork'd lightning, first  
Breaking the clouds where it was nurst,  
    Did thorough his own side  
    His fiery way divide: 16

(For 't is all one to courage high,  
The emulous, or enemy;  
    And with such, to enclose  
    Is more than to oppose;) 20

Then burning through the air he went  
And palaces and temples rent;  
    And Cæsar's head at last  
    Did through his laurels blast. 24

'T is madness to resist or blame  
The face of angry Heaven's flame;  
    And if we would speak true,  
    Much to the man is due, 28

Who, from his private gardens, where  
He lived reservèd and austere,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

(As if his highest plot  
To plant the bergamot;) 32

Could by industrious valour climb  
To ruin the great work of Time,  
And cast the Kingdoms old  
Into another mould; 36

Though Justice against Fate complain,  
And plead the ancient rights in vain;  
(But those do hold or break  
As men are strong or weak.) 40

Nature, that hateth emptiness,  
Allows of penetration less,  
And therefore must make room  
Where greater spirits come. 44

What field of all the civil war  
Where his were not the deepest scar?  
And Hampton shows what part  
He had of wiser art; 48

Where, twining subtle fears with hope,  
He wove a net of such a scope  
That Charles himself might chase  
To Caresbrooke's narrow case; 52

That thence the Royal actor borne,  
The tragic scaffold might adorn:  
While round the armed bands  
Did clap their bloody hands. 56

## An Horatian Ode

He nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable scene,  
    But with his keener eye  
    The axe's edge did try; 60

Nor call'd the gods, with vulgar spite,  
To vindicate his helpless right;  
    But bow'd his comely head  
    Down, as upon a bed. 64

This was that memorable hour  
Which first assured the forcèd power:  
    So when they did design  
    The Capitol's first line, 68

A bleeding head, where they begun,  
Did fright the architects to run;  
    And yet in that the State  
    Foresaw its happy fate! 72

And now the Irish are ashamed  
To see themselves in one year tamed;  
    So much one man can do,  
    That does both act and know. 76

They can affirm his praises best,  
And have, though overcome, confessed  
    How good he is, how just  
    And fit for highest trust. 80

Nor yet grown stiffer with command,  
But still in the republic's hand—

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

How fit he is to sway  
That can so well obey! 84

He to the Commons' feet presents  
A Kingdom for his first year's rents;  
And, what he may, forbears  
His fame, to make it theirs: 88

And has his sword and spoils ungirt,  
To lay them at the public's skirt.  
So when the falcon high  
Falls heavy from the sky, 92

She, having kill'd, no more doth search,  
But on the next green bough to perch;  
Where, when he first does lure,  
The falconer has her sure. 96

What may not then our Isle presume  
While victory his crest does plume?  
What may not others fear,  
If thus he crowns each year? 100

As Cæsar he, ere long, to Gaul,  
To Italy an Hannibal,  
And to all States not free,  
Shall climacteric be. 104

The Pict no shelter now shall find  
Within his particolour'd mind,  
But, from this valour, sad  
Shrink underneath the plaid; 108

## A Supplication

Happy, if in the tufted brake  
The English hunter him mistake,  
Nor lay his hounds in near  
The Caledonian deer. 112

But thou, the war's and fortune's son,  
March indefatigably on;  
And for the last effect,  
Still keep the sword erect: 116

Besides the force it has to fright  
The spirits of the shady night,  
The same arts that did gain  
A power, must it maintain. 120

1650. 1776.

*Andrew Marvell.*

## A SUPPLICATION

*From Davideis*

AWAKE, awake, my Lyre!  
And tell thy silent master's humble tale  
In sounds that may prevail;  
Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire:  
Though so exalted she,  
And I so lowly be,  
Tell her, such different notes make all thy  
harmony. 7

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Hark! how the strings awake:  
And, though the moving hand approach not near,  
Themselves with awful fear  
A kind of numerous trembling make.  
Now all thy forces try;  
Now all thy charms apply;  
Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her  
eye.

14

Weak Lyre! thy virtue sure  
Is useless here, since thou art only found  
To cure, but not to wound;  
And she to wound, but not to cure.  
Too weak too wilt thou prove  
My passion to remove;  
Physic to other ills, thou 'rt nourishment to  
love.

21

Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre!  
For thou canst never tell my humble tale  
In sounds that will prevail,  
Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire;  
All thy vain mirth lay by,  
Bid thy strings silent lie,  
Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre, and let thy master  
die.

28

1656.

*Abraham Cowley.*

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S  
DAY, 1687

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
    This universal frame began;  
When Nature underneath a heap  
    Of jarring atoms lay,  
And could not heave her head,  
The tuneful voice was heard from high,  
    Arise, ye more than dead!  
Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,  
    In order to their stations leap,  
And Music's power obey.  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
    This universal frame began:  
From harmony to harmony,  
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
    The diapason closing full in man. 15

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?  
    When Jubal struck the chorded shell,  
His listening brethren stood around,  
    And, wondering, on their faces fell,  
To worship that celestial sound.



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Less than a God they thought there could not  
dwell

Within the hollow of that shell,  
That spoke so sweetly and so well.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell? 24

The trumpet's loud clangor

Excites us to arms,

With shrill notes of anger,

And mortal alarms.

The double double double beat

Of the thundering drum

Cries, Hark! the foes come;

Charge, charge, 't is too late to retreat!

32

The soft complaining flute

In dying notes discovers

The woes of hopeless lovers,

Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim

Their jealous pangs, and desperation,

Fury, frantic indignation,

Depth of pains and height of passion,

For the fair, disdainful dame.

But O, what art can teach,

What human voice can reach,

The sacred organ's praise?

Notes inspiring holy love,

Notes that wing their heavenly ways

To mend the choirs above.

47

## Alexander's Feast

Orpheus could lead the savage race,  
And trees unrooted left their place,  
    Sequacious of the lyre;  
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:  
When to her organ vocal breath was given,  
An angel heard, and straight appeared  
    Mistaking earth for heaven. 54

### GRAND CHORUS

*As from the power of sacred lays  
    The spheres began to move,  
And sung the great Creator's praise  
    To all the blessed above;  
So, when the last and dreadful hour  
This crumbling pageant shall devour,  
The trumpet shall be heard on high,  
    The dead shall live, the living die,  
And Music shall untune the sky. 63*

1687.

*John Dryden.*

## ALEXANDER'S FEAST; OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

'T WAS at the royal feast, for Persia won  
    By Philip's warlike son:  
Aloft in awful state  
The godlike hero sate  
    On his imperial throne;  
His valiant peers were placed around,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound  
(So should desert in arms be crowned) ;

The lovely Thais, by his side,  
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride  
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.

Happy, happy, happy pair !

None but the brave,

None but the brave,

None but the brave deserves the fair. 15

### CHORUS

*Happy, happy, happy pair !*

*None but the brave,*

*None but the brave,*

*None but the brave deserves the fair. 19*

Timotheus, placed on high

Amid the tuneful choir,

With flying fingers touched the lyre ;

The trembling notes ascend the sky,

And heavenly joys inspire.

The song began from Jove,

Who left his blissful seats above

(Such is the power of mighty love).

A dragon's fiery form belied the god ;

Sublime on radiant spires he rode,

When he to fair Olympia pressed,

And while he sought her snowy breast ;

Then round her slender waist he curled,

And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign  
of the world.

## Alexander's Feast

The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,  
A present deity! they shout around;  
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.

With ravished ears  
The monarch hears,  
Assumes the god,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres. 41

### CHORUS

*With ravished ears  
The monarch hears,  
Assumes the god,  
Affects to nod,  
And seems to shake the spheres. 46*

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician  
sung,

Of Bacchus—ever fair and ever young:

The jolly god in triumph comes;

Sound the trumpets; beat the drums:

Flushed with a purple grace

He shows his honest face:

Now give the hautboys breath. He comes! he  
comes!

Bacchus, ever fair and young,

Drinking joys did first ordain;

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,

Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;

Rich the treasure,

Sweet the pleasure,

Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### CHORUS

*Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,  
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;  
Rich the treasure,  
Sweet the pleasure,  
Sweet is pleasure after pain.*

65

Soothed with the sound the king grew vain;  
Fought all his battles o'er again;  
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he  
slew the slain.

The master saw the madness rise;  
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;  
And, while he heaven and earth defied,  
Changed his hand and checked his pride.

He chose a mournful muse,  
Soft pity to infuse:

He sung Darius, great and good,

By too severe a fate,  
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,  
Fallen from his high estate,

And weltering in his blood;  
Deserted, at his utmost need,  
By those his former bounty fed;  
On the bare earth exposed he lies,  
With not a friend to close his eyes.

With downcast looks the joyous victor sate,  
Revolving in his altered soul

The various turns of chance below;  
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;  
And tears began to flow.

88

## Alexander's Feast

### CHORUS

*Revolving in his altered soul  
The various turns of chance below;  
And, now and then, a sigh he stole;  
And tears began to flow.* 92

The mighty master smiled, to see  
That love was in the next degree;  
'T was but a kindred sound to move,  
For pity melts the mind to love.  
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,  
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.  
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;  
Honor, but an empty bubble;  
Never ending, still beginning,  
Fighting still, and still destroying:  
If the world be worth thy winning,  
Think, O, think it worth enjoying!  
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,  
Take the good the gods provide thee.  
The many rend the skies with loud applause;  
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.  
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,  
Gazed on the fair  
Who caused his care,  
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,  
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:  
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,  
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast. 115

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### CHORUS

*The prince, unable to conceal his pain,  
Gazed on the fair  
Who caused his care,  
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,  
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:  
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,  
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast. 122*

Now strike the golden lyre again;  
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.  
Break his bands of sleep asunder,  
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.  
Hark, hark, the horrid sound  
Has raised up his head;  
As awaked from the dead,  
And, amazed he stares around.  
Revenge! revenge! Timotheus cries,  
See the furies arise!  
See the snakes that they rear,  
How they hiss in their hair,  
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!  
Behold a ghastly band,  
Each a torch in his hand!  
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were  
slain,  
And unburied remain,  
Inglorious on the plain:  
Give the vengeance due  
To the valiant crew.  
Behold how they toss their torches on high,

## Alexander's Feast

How they point to the Persian abodes,  
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!  
The princes applaud with a furious joy;  
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to  
destroy:

Thais led the way,  
To light him to his prey,  
And, like another Helen, fired another  
Troy!

150

### CHORUS

*And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to  
destroy:*

*Thais led the way,  
To light him to his prey,  
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy!*

154

Thus, long ago,  
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,  
While organs yet were mute;  
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,  
And sounding lyre,  
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft  
desire.

At last divine Cecilia came,  
Inventress of the vocal frame;  
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,  
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,  
And added length to solemn sounds,  
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown  
before.



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
Or both divide the crown;  
He raised a mortal to the skies,  
She drew an angel down.

170

### GRAND CHORUS

*At last divine Cecilia came,  
Inventress of the vocal frame;  
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,  
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,  
And added length to solemn sounds,  
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown  
before.*

*Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
Or both divide the crown;  
He raised a mortal to the skies,  
She drew an angel down.*

180

1697.

*John Dryden.*

## ODE TO ADVERSITY

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless power,  
Thou tamer of the human breast,  
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour  
The bad affright, afflict the best!  
Bound in thy adamantine chain  
The proud are taught to taste of pain,  
And purple tyrants vainly groan  
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

## Ode to Adversity

When first thy sire to send on earth  
Virtue, his darling child, design'd,  
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,  
And bade to form her infant mind.  
Stern rugged nurse! thy rigid lore  
With patience many a year she bore;  
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,  
And from her own she learn'd to melt at others'  
          woe. 16

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly  
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,  
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,  
And leave us leisure to be good.  
Light they disperse, and with them go  
The summer friend, the flattering foe;  
By vain Prosperity received,  
To her they vow their truth, and are again  
          believed. 24

Wisdom in sable garb array'd,  
Immersed in rapturous thought profound,  
And Melancholy, silent maid  
With leaden eye that loves the ground,  
Still on thy solemn steps attend;  
Warm Charity, the general friend,  
With Justice to herself severe,  
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing  
          tear. 32

Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,  
Dread Goddess, lay thy chastening hand!

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,  
Nor circled with the vengeful band  
(As by the impious thou art seen)  
With thundering voice, and threatening mien,  
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,  
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Pov-  
erty. 40

Thy form benign, oh Goddess, wear,  
Thy milder influence impart,  
Thy philosophic train be there  
To soften, not to wound my heart,  
The generous spark extinct revive,  
Teach me to love and to forgive,  
Exact my own defects to scan,  
What others are, to feel, and know myself a  
Man. 48

1742. 1753.

*Thomas Gray.*

## ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,  
That crown the wat'ry glade,  
Where grateful Science still adores  
Her Henry's holy shade;  
And ye, that from the stately brow  
Of Windsor's heights the expanse below  
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,

## A Distant Prospect of Eton College

Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among  
Wanders the hoary Thames along  
His silver-winding way. 10

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,  
Ah fields beloved in vain,  
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,  
A stranger yet to pain!  
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As waving fresh their gladsome wing  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring. 20

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen  
Full many a sprightly race  
Disporting on thy margent green  
The paths of pleasure trace,  
Who foremost now delight to cleave  
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?  
The captive linnet which enthrall,  
What idle progeny succeed  
To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
Or urge the flying ball? 30

While some on earnest business bent  
Their murmuring labours ply  
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint  
To sweeten liberty;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Some bold adventurers disdain  
The limits of their little reign,  
And unknown regions dare descry;  
Still as they run they look behind,  
They hear a voice in every wind,  
And snatch a fearful joy. 40

Gay Hope is theirs by fancy fed,  
Less pleasing when possess'd;  
The tear forgot as soon as shed,  
The sunshine of the breast;  
Theirs buxom Health of rosy hue,  
Wild Wit, Invention ever-new,  
And lively Cheer of Vigour born;  
The thoughtless day, the easy night,  
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,  
That fly th' approach of morn. 50

Alas, regardless of their doom,  
The little victims play!  
No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor care beyond to-day;  
Yet see how all around 'em wait  
The Ministers of human fate,  
And black Misfortune's baleful train!  
Ah, shew them where in ambush stand,  
To seize their prey, the murderous band!  
Ah, tell them they are men! 60

These shall the fury Passions tear,  
The vultures of the mind,  
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,  
And Shame that skulks behind

## A Distant Prospect of Eton College

Or pining Love shall waste their youth,  
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,  
    That inly gnaws the secret heart,  
And Envy wan, and faded Care,  
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,  
    And Sorrow's piercing dart. 70

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
    Then whirl the wretch from high,  
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,  
    And grinning Infamy.  
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,  
And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,  
    That mocks the tear it forced to flow;  
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,  
And moody Madness laughing wild  
    Amid severest woe. 80

Lo! in the Vale of Years beneath  
    A griesly troop are seen,  
The painful family of Death,  
    More hideous than their queen:  
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,  
That every labouring sinew strains,  
    Those in the deeper vitals rage;  
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,  
That numbs the soul with icy hand,  
    And slow-consuming Age. 90

To each his sufferings; all are men,  
    Condemn'd alike to groan,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The tender for another's pain,  
The unfeeling for his own.  
Yet ah! why should they know their fate?  
Since sorrow never comes too late,  
And happiness too swiftly flies.  
Thought would destroy their paradise.  
No more; where ignorance is bliss,  
'Tis folly to be wise.

100

1742. 1747.

*Thomas Gray.*

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY

*A Pindaric Ode*

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,  
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.  
From Helicon's harmonious springs  
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:  
The laughing flowers that round them blow  
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.  
Now the rich stream of Music winds along,  
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,  
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign;  
Now rolling down the steep amain,  
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:  
The rocks and nodding groves re-bellow to the  
roar.

12

O Sovereign of the willing soul,  
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,  
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares

## The Progress of Poesy

And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.  
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War  
Has curb'd the fury of his car,  
And dropt his thirsty lance at thy command.  
Perching on the sceptred hand  
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king  
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:  
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie  
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his  
eye.

24

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,  
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.  
O'er Idalia's velvet-green  
The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen  
On Cytherea's day  
With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,  
Frisking light in frolic measures;  
Now pursuing, now retreating,  
Now in circling troops they meet:  
To brisk notes in cadence beating  
Glance their many-twinkling feet.  
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach  
declare:  
Where'er she turns the Graces homage  
pay:  
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,  
In gliding state she wins her easy way:  
O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move  
The bloom of young Desire and purple light  
of Love.

41



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Man's feeble race what ills await!  
Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,  
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,  
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of  
Fate!  
The fond complaint, my Song, disprove,  
And justify the laws of Jove.  
Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?  
Night, and all her sickly dews.  
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry,  
He gives to range the dreary sky:  
Till down the eastern cliffs afar  
Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts  
of war. 53

In climes beyond the solar road,  
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains  
roam,  
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom  
To cheer the shivering Native's dull abode.  
And oft, beneath the odorous shade  
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,  
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,  
In loose numbers wildly sweet,  
Their feather-cinctured Chiefs, and dusky loves.  
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,  
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,  
The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy  
flame. 65

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,  
Isles, that crown the Ægean deep,

## The Progress of Poesy

Fields that cool Ilissus laves,  
Or where Mæander's amber waves  
In lingering labyrinths creep,  
How do your tuneful echoes languish,  
Mute, but to the voice of Anguish!  
Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breathed around;  
Every shade and hallow'd fountain  
Murmur'd deep a solemn sound:  
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour  
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.  
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,  
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.  
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled  
coast. 82

Far from the sun and summer-gale,  
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,  
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,  
To him the mighty Mother did unveil  
Her awful face: the dauntless Child  
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled.  
This pencil take (she said) whose colours clear  
Richly paint the vernal year:  
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!  
This can unlock the gates of Joy;  
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,  
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears. 94

Nor second He, that rode sublime  
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,  
The secrets of the Abyss to spy:

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and  
Time:

The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,  
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,  
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,  
Closed his eyes in endless night.  
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car  
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear  
Two Coursers of ethereal race  
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-  
resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!  
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er  
Scatters from her pictured urn  
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.  
But ah! 't is heard no more ——

O! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit  
Wakes thee now? Tho' he inherit  
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,  
That the Theban Eagle bear,  
Sailing with supreme dominion

Thro' the azure deep of air:  
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run  
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray  
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the Sun:  
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way  
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the  
Great.

123

1757.

*Thomas Gray.*

## THE PASSIONS

### *An Ode for Music*

WHEN Music, heavenly maid, was young,  
While yet in early Greece she sung,  
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,  
Thronged around her magic cell,—  
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,—  
Possessed beyond the muse's painting;  
By turns they felt the glowing mind  
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;  
Till once, 't is said, when all were fired,  
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired,  
From the supporting myrtles round  
They snatched her instruments of sound;  
And, as they oft had heard apart  
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,  
Each (for madness ruled the hour)  
Would prove his own expressive power. 16

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,  
Amid the chords bewildered laid,  
And back recoiled, he knew not why,  
E'en at the sound himself had made. 20

Next Anger rushed; his eyes, on fire,  
In lightnings owned his secret stings:

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

In one rude clash he struck the lyre,  
And swept with hurried hand the strings. 24

With woful measures wan Despair,  
Low, sullen sounds, his grief beguiled,—  
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;  
'T was sad by fits, by starts 't was wild. 28

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,—  
What was thy delightful measure?  
Still it whispered promised pleasure,  
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!  
Still would her touch the strain prolong;  
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,  
She called on Echo still, through all the song;  
And where her sweetest theme she chose,  
A soft responsive voice was heard at every  
close;  
And Hope, enchanted, smiled, and waved her  
golden hair.  
And longer had she sung—but, with a frown,  
Revenge impatient rose;  
He threw his blood-stained sword in thunder  
down;  
And, with a withering look,  
The war-denouncing trumpet took,  
And blew a blast so loud and dread,  
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe!  
And ever and anon he beat  
The doubling drum with furious heat;  
And though, sometimes, each dreary pause  
between,

## The Passions

Dejected Pity, at his side,  
Her soul-subduing voice applied,  
Yet still he kept his wild, unaltered mien,  
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting  
from his head. 52

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught were fixed,—  
Sad proof of thy distressful state;  
Of differing themes the veering song was  
mixed;  
And now it courted Love,—now, raving,  
called on Hate. 56

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,  
Pale Melancholy sate retired;  
And from her wild sequestered seat,  
In notes by distance made more sweet,  
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive  
soul:  
And, dashing soft from rocks around,  
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;  
Through glades and glooms the mingled  
measure stole;  
Or o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,  
Round an holy calm diffusing,  
Love of peace, and lonely musing,  
In hollow murmurs died away.  
But O, how altered was its sprightlier tone,  
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,  
Her bow across her shoulder flung,  
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,  
Blew an inspiring air, that date and thicket rung,—

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known!  
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed  
    queen,  
Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,  
Peeping from forth their alleys green:  
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;  
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen  
    spear. 79

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:  
He, with viny crown advancing,  
    First to the lively pipe his hand address;  
But soon he saw the brisk-awakening viol,  
    Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the  
    best;  
They would have thought, who heard the strain,  
    They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,  
    Amidst the festal-sounding shades,  
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,  
While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings,  
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round:  
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;  
    And he, amidst his frolic play,  
    As if he would the charming air repay,  
Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings. 94

O Music! sphere-descended maid,  
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid!  
Why, goddess, why, to us denied,  
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?  
As, in that loved Athenian bower,  
You learned an all-commanding power,

## Ode to Evening

Thy mimic soul, O nymph endeared,  
Can well recall what then it heard.

102

Where is thy native simple heart,  
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?  
Arise, as in that elder time,  
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!  
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,  
Fill thy recording sister's page;  
'T is said—and I believe the tale—  
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,  
Had more of strength, diviner rage,  
Than all which charms this laggard age,—  
E'en all at once together found,—  
Cecilia's mingled world of sound.  
O, bid our vain endeavors cease;  
Revive the just designs of Greece!  
Return in all thy simple state,—  
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

118

1746.

*William Collins.*

## ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,  
May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear,  
Like thy own solemn springs,  
Thy springs, and dying gales,

4

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-hair'd  
sun

Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

With brede ethereal wove,  
O'erhang his wavy bed: 8

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-eyed bat  
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern  
wing;  
Or where the beetle winds  
His small but sullen horn, 12

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,  
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:  
Now teach me, maid composed,  
To breathe some soften'd strain, 16

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening  
vale,  
May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,  
As, musing slow, I hail  
Thy genial loved return! 20

For when thy folding-star arising shows  
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp  
The fragrant hours, and elves  
Who slept in flowers the day, 24

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows  
with sedge,  
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,  
The pensive pleasures sweet  
Prepare thy shadowy car. 28

## Ode to Evening

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety  
lake  
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallow'd  
pile,  
Or up-land fallows grey  
Reflect its last cool gleam. 32

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,  
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,  
That from the mountain's side,  
Views wilds, and swelling floods, 36

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires;  
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all  
Thy dewy fingers draw  
The gradual dusky veil. 40

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he  
wont,  
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!  
While summer loves to sport  
Beneath thy lingering light; 44

While fallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;  
Or winter, yelling through the troublous air,  
Affrights thy shrinking train,  
And rudely rends thy robes; 48

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,  
Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipp'd  
health,

Thy gentlest influence own,

And hymn thy favourite name!

52

1746.

*William Collins.*

## "WHAT CONSTITUTES A STATE?"

*An Ode in Imitation of Alcaeus*

WHAT constitutes a State?

Not high-raised battlement or labored mound,

Thick wall or moated gate;

Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned;

Not bays and broad-armed ports,

Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;

Not starred and spangled courts,

Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to  
pride.

No; men, high-minded men,

With powers as far above dull brutes endued 10

In forest, brake, or den,

As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude;

Men who their duties know,

But know their rights, and, knowing, dare  
maintain,

Prevent the long-aimed blow,

And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain:

These constitute a State,

And sovereign Law, that State's collected will,

O'er thrones and globes elate

## Intimations of Immortality

Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill. 20  
Smit by her sacred frown,  
The fiend, Dissension, like a vapor sinks;  
And e'en the all-dazzling crown  
Hides his faint rays, and at her bidding shrinks.  
Such was this heaven-loved isle,  
Than Lesbos fairer, and the Cretan shore!  
No more shall freedom smile?  
Shall Britons languish, and be men no more?  
Since all must life resign,  
Those sweet rewards which decorate the brave 30  
'T is folly to decline,  
And steal inglorious to the silent grave.

1781.

*Sir William Jones.*

## ODE

### INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and  
stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparell'd in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no  
more. 9

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The rainbow comes and goes,  
And lovely is the rose,  
The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare,  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair;  
The sunshine is a glorious birth;  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the  
earth. 18

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,  
And while the young lambs bound  
As to the tabor's sound,  
To me alone there came a thought of grief:  
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
And again am strong:  
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the  
steep;  
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;  
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,  
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,  
And all the earth is gay;  
Land and sea  
Give themselves up to jollity,  
And with the heart of May  
Doth every beast keep holiday;—  
Thou child of joy,  
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou  
happy  
Shepherd-boy! 36

## Intimations of Immortality

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call  
Ye to each other make: I see  
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;  
My heart is at your festival,  
My head hath its coronal,  
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.  
O evil day! if I were sullen  
While Earth herself adorning,  
This sweet May-morning,  
And the children are culling  
On every side,  
In a thousand valleys far and wide,  
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines  
warm,  
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—  
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!  
—But there 's a tree, of many, one,  
A single field which I have look'd upon,  
Both of them speak of something that is gone:  
The pansy at my feet  
Doth the same tale repeat:  
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream? 58

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
    Upon the growing boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
    He sees it in his joy;  
The youth, who daily farther from the east  
    Must travel, still is Nature's priest,  
    And by the vision splendid  
    Is on his way attended;  
At length the man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day. 77

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;  
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,  
And, even with something of a mother's mind,  
    And no unworthy aim,  
    The homely nurse doth all she can  
To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,  
    Forget the glories he hath known,  
And that imperial palace whence he came.  
Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,  
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!  
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,  
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
With light upon him from his father's eyes!  
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,  
Some fragment from his dream of human life,  
Shaped by himself with newly-learnéd art;  
    A wedding or a festival,  
    A mourning or a funeral;  
    And this hath now his heart,

## Intimations of Immortality

And unto this he frames his song:  
Then will he fit his tongue  
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;  
But it will not be long  
Ere this be thrown aside,  
And with new joy and pride  
The little actor cons another part;  
Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'  
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,  
That life brings with her in her equipage;  
As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation.

108

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
Thy soul's immensity;  
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—  
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!  
On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;  
Thou, over whom thy immortality  
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,  
A presence which is not to be put by;  
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might  
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,  
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke  
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,  
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?  
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And custom lie upon thee with a weight  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

129

O joy! that in our embers  
Is something that doth live,  
That Nature yet remembers  
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
Perpetual benediction: not indeed  
For that which is most worthy to be blest—  
Delight and liberty, the simple creed  
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,  
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his  
breast:

—Not for these I raise  
The song of thanks and praise;  
But for those obstinate questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings;  
Blank misgivings of a creature  
Moving about in worlds not realized,  
High instincts before which our mortal nature  
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprized:  
But for those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,  
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;  
Uphold us—cherish—and have power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake,  
To perish never;

## Intimations of Immortality

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour

Nor man nor boy,

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,

Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence, in a season of calm weather

Though inland far we be,

Our souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither,

And see the children sport upon the shore,

And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore. 168

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!

And let the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,

Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts today

Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so  
bright

Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find

Strength in what remains behind;

In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind. 187

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and  
Groves,

Forbode not any severing of our loves!  
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;  
I only have relinquish'd one delight  
To live beneath your more habitual sway.  
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,  
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;  
The innocent brightness of a new-born day  
Is lovely yet;

The clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;  
Another race hath been, and other palms are  
won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. 204

1807.

*William Wordsworth.*

## ODE TO DUTY

STERN Daughter of the voice of God!  
O Duty! if that name thou love  
Who art a light to guide, a rod  
To check the erring, and reprove;  
Thou who art victory and law  
When empty terrors overawe;  
From vain temptations dost set free;  
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity! 8

## Ode to Duty

There are who ask not if thine eye  
Be on them; who, in love and truth,  
Where no misgiving is, rely  
Upon the genial sense of youth:  
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot  
Who do thy work, and know it not:  
Oh! if through confidence misplaced  
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around  
          them cast. 16

Serene will be our days and bright,  
And happy will our nature be,  
When love is an unerring light,  
And joy its own security.  
And they a blissful course may hold  
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,  
Live in the spirit of this creed;  
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their  
          need. 24

I, loving freedom, and untried;  
No sport of every random gust,  
Yet being to myself a guide,  
Too blindly have reposed my trust:  
And oft, when in my heart was heard  
Thy timely mandate, I deferr'd  
The task, in smoother walks to stray;  
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if  
          I may. 32

Through no disturbance of my soul,  
Or strong compunction in me wrought,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

I supplicate for thy control;  
But in the quietness of thought:  
Me this uncharter'd freedom tires;  
I feel the weight of chance-desires:  
My hopes no more must change their name,  
I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40

Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face:  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds  
And fragrance in thy footing treads;  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;  
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are  
fresh and strong. 48

To humbler functions, awful Power!  
I call thee: I myself commend  
Unto thy guidance from this hour;  
Oh, let my weakness have an end!  
Give unto me, made lowly wise,  
The spirit of self-sacrifice;  
The confidence of reason give;  
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me  
live. 56

1807.

*William Wordsworth.*

## FRANCE: AN ODE

YE Clouds! that far above me float and pause,  
Whose pathless march no mortal may  
control!

Ye Ocean Waves! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,  
Yield homage only to eternal laws!

Ye Woods! that listen to the nightbirds'  
singing,

Midway the smooth and perilous slope  
reclined,

Save when your own imperious branches  
swinging,

Have made a solemn music of the wind!

Where, like a man beloved of God,

Through glooms, which never woodman trod,  
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,

My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I  
wound,

Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,

By each rude shape and wild unconquerable  
sound!

O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!

And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!

Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!

Yea, every thing that is and will be free!

Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,

With what deep worship I have still adored  
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

21

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

When France in wrath her giant-limbs up-  
reared,  
And with that oath, which smote air, earth  
and sea,  
Stamped her strong foot and said she would  
be free,  
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared!  
With what a joy my lofty gratulation  
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:  
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,  
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,  
The Monarchs marched in evil day,  
And Britain join'd the dire array;  
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,  
Though many friendships, many youthful loves  
Had sworn the patriot emotion  
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and  
groves;  
Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat  
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,  
And shame too long delay'd and vain retreat!  
For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim  
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame;  
But blessed the pæans of delivered France,  
And hung my head and wept at Britain's  
name.

42

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's  
loud scream  
With that sweet music of deliverance strove!  
Though all the fierce and drunken passions  
wove

## France: An Ode

A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's  
dream!

Ye storms, that round the dawning east  
assembled,

The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!"

And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and  
trembled,

The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm  
and bright;

When France her front deep-scarr'd and gory  
Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory;

When, insupportably advancing,

Her arm made mockery of the warrior's  
ramp;

While timid looks of fury glancing,

Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal  
stamp,

Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;

Then I reproached my fears that would not  
flee;

'And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her  
lore

In the low huts of them that toil and groan!

And, conquering by her happiness alone,

Shall France compel the nations to be free,

Till Love and Joy look round, and call the  
earth their own."

63

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those  
dreams!

I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,

From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained  
streams!

Heroes, that for your peaceful country  
perished,

And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain snows  
With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I  
cherished

One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!

To scatter rage and traitorous guilt

Where Peace her jealous home had built;

A patriot-race to disinherit

Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;

And with inexpiable spirit

To taint the bloodless freedom of the moun-  
taineer—

O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous,  
blind,

And patriot only in pernicious toils!

Are these thy boasts, Champion of human  
kind?

To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,  
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous  
prey;

To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils

From freemen torn; to tempt and to  
betray?

84

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,  
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad  
game

They burst their manacles and wear the name  
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!

## Dejection: An Ode

O Liberty! with profitless endeavour  
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;  
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain nor  
ever  
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.  
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,  
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)  
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,  
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,  
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,  
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of  
the waves!  
And then I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,  
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze  
above,  
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!  
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,  
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,  
Possessing all things with intensest love,  
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there. 105

1798.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

## DEJECTION: AN ODE

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,  
With the old Moon in her arms;  
And I fear, I fear, my master dear!  
We shall have a deadly storm.

*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.*

WELL! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made  
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,  
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence  
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy  
    flakes,  
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes  
    Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,  
    Which better far were mute.  
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!  
And overspread with phantom light,  
    (With swimming phantom light o'erspread  
    But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)  
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling  
    The coming-on of rain and squally blast.  
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,  
    And the slant night-shower driving loud and  
    fast!  
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst  
    they awed,  
    And sent my soul abroad,  
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,  
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move  
    and live!

20

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,  
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,  
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,  
    In word, or sigh, or tear—  
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,  
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,  
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,  
Have I been gazing on the western sky,  
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:  
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!

## Dejection: An Ode

And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,  
That give away their motion to the stars;  
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,  
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:  
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew  
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;  
I see them all so excellently fair,  
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are! 38

My genial spirits fail;  
And what can these avail  
To lift the smothering weight from off my  
breast?  
It were a vain endeavor,  
Though I should gaze for ever  
On that green light that lingers in the west:  
I may not hope from outward forms to win  
The passion and the life, whose fountains are  
within. 46

O Lady! we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does Nature live:  
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!  
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,  
Than that inanimate cold world allowed  
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,  
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth  
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
Enveloping the Earth—  
And from the soul itself must there be sent  
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
Of all sweet sounds the life and element! 58

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be!  
What, and wherein it doth exist,  
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,  
This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,  
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,  
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and  
shower,

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,  
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,  
A new Earth and new Heaven,  
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—  
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—

We in ourselves rejoice!  
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,  
All melodies the echoes of that voice,  
All colours a suffusion from that light. 75

There was a time when, though my path was  
rough,

This joy within me dallied with distress,  
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff  
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:  
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,  
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed  
mine.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth:  
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;  
But oh! each visitation  
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,  
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

## Dejection: An Ode

For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
But to be still and patient, all I can;  
And haply by abstruse research to steal  
From my own nature all the natural man—  
This was my sole resource, my only plan:  
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul. 93

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my  
mind,  
Reality's dark dream!  
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,  
Which long has raved unnoticed.  
What a scream  
Of agony by torture lengthened out  
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st  
without,  
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,  
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,  
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,  
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,  
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,  
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,  
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry  
song,  
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.  
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!  
Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!  
What tell'st thou now about?  
'T is of the rushing of an host in rout,  
With groans of trampled men, with smarting  
wounds—

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

At once they groan with pain, and shudder with  
the cold!

But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!

And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,  
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is  
over—

It tells another tale, with sounds less deep  
and loud!

A tale of less affright,  
And tempered with delight,  
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,  
'T is of a little child  
Upon a lonesome wild,  
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:  
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,  
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her  
mother hear.

126

'T is midnight, but small thoughts have I of  
sleep:

Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!  
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,  
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,  
May all the stars hang bright above her  
dwelling,

Silent as though they watched the sleeping  
Earth!

With light heart may she rise,  
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,  
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;  
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,

## Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte

Their life the eddying of her living soul!

O simple spirit, guided from above,

Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,

Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice. 140

1802.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

## ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

"Expende Annibalem : — quot libras in duce summo  
Invenies ?"—Juvenal, *Sat.* x.

'T is done—but yesterday a King!

And arm'd with Kings to strive—

And now thou art a nameless thing:

So abject—yet alive!

Is this the man of thousand thrones,

Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,

And can he thus survive?

Since he, miscalled the Morning Star,

Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far. 9

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind

Who bow'd so low the knee?

By gazing on thyself grown blind,

Thou taught'st the rest to see.

With might unquestion'd,—power to save,—

Thine only gift hath been the grave,

To those that worshipp'd thee;

Nor till thy fall could mortals guess

Ambition's less than littleness! 18



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Thanks for that lesson—It will teach  
To after-warriors more,  
Than high Philosophy can preach,  
And vainly preach'd before.  
That spell upon the minds of men  
Breaks never to unite again,  
That led them to adore  
Those Pagod things of sabre sway  
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay. 27

The triumph and the vanity,  
The rapture of the strife—  
The earthquake voice of Victory,  
To thee the breath of life;  
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway  
Which man seem'd made but to obey,  
Wherewith renown was rife—  
All quell'd!—Dark Spirit! what must be  
The madness of thy memory! 36

The Desolator desolate!  
The Victor overthrown!  
The Arbiter of others' fate  
A Suppliant for his own!  
Is it some yet imperial hope  
That with such change can calmly cope?  
Or dread of death alone?  
To die a prince—or live a slave—  
Thy choice is most ignobly brave! 45

He who of old would rend the oak,  
Dream'd not of the rebound:

## Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte

Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke—

Alone—how look'd he round?

Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,

An equal deed hast done at length,

And darker fate hast found:

He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;

But thou must eat thy heart away! 54

The Roman, when his burning heart

Was slaked with blood of Rome,

Threw down the dagger—dared depart,

In savage grandeur, home—

He dared depart in utter scorn

Of men that such a yoke had borne,

Yet left him such a doom!

His only glory was that hour

Of self-upheld abandon'd power. 63

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway

Had lost its quickening spell,

Cast crowns for rosaries away,

An empire for a cell;

A strict accountant of his beads,

A subtle disputant on creeds,

His dotage trifled well:

Yet better had he neither known

A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne. 72

But thou—from thy reluctant hand

The thunderbolt is wrung—

Too late thou leav'st the high command

To which thy weakness clung;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

All Evil Spirit as thou art,  
It is enough to grieve the heart  
To see thine own unstrung;  
To think that God's fair world hath been  
The footstool of a thing so mean; 81

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,  
Who thus can hoard his own!  
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,  
And thank'd him for a throne!  
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,  
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear  
In humblest guise have shown.  
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind  
A brighter name to lure mankind! 99

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,  
Nor written thus in vain—  
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,  
Or deepen every stain:  
If thou hadst died as honor dies,  
Some new Napoleon might arise,  
To shame the world again—  
But who would soar the solar height,  
To set in such a starless night? 99

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust  
Is vile as vulgar clay;  
Thy scales, Mortality! are just  
To all that pass away:  
But yet methought the living great

## Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte

Some higher sparks should animate,  
To dazzle and dismay:  
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth  
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth. 108

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,  
Thy still imperial bride;  
How bears her breast the torturing hour?  
Still clings she to thy side?  
Must she too bend, must she too share  
Thy late repentance, long despair,  
Thou throneless Homicide?  
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,—  
'T is worth thy vanish'd diadem! 117

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,  
And gaze upon the sea;  
That element may meet thy smile—  
It ne'er was ruled by thee!  
Or trace with thine all idle hand  
In loitering mood upon the sand  
That Earth is now as free!  
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now  
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow. 126

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage  
What thoughts will there be thine,  
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?  
But one—"The world *was* mine!"  
Unless, like he of Babylon,  
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Life will not long confine  
That spirit pour'd so widely forth—  
So long obey'd—so little worth! 135

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,  
Wilt thou withstand the shock?  
And share with him, the unforgiven,  
His vulture and his rock!  
Foredoom'd by God—by man accurst,  
And that last act, though not thy worst,  
The very Fiend's arch mock;  
He in his fall preserved his pride,  
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died! 144

There was a day—there was an hour,  
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—  
When that immeasurable power  
Unsated to resign  
Had been an act of purer fame  
Than gathers round Marengo's name,  
And gilded thy decline,  
Through the long twilight of all time,  
Despite some passing clouds of crime. 153

But thou forsooth must be a king,  
And don the purple vest,  
As if that foolish robe could wring  
Remembrance from thy breast.  
Where is that faded garment? where  
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,  
The star, the string, the crest?

## Ode on Venice

Vain froward child of empire! say,  
Are all thy playthings snatched away? 162

Where may the wearied eye repose  
When gazing on the Great;  
Where neither guilty glory glows,  
Nor despicable state?  
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—  
The Cincinnatus of the West,  
Whom envy dared not hate,  
Bequeath'd the name of Washington,  
To make man blush there was but one! 171

1814.

*Lord Byron.*

## ODE ON VENICE

OH Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls  
Are level with the waters, there shall be  
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,  
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!  
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,  
What should thy sons do?—anything but weep:  
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.  
In contrast with their fathers—as the slime,  
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,  
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam 10  
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,  
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,  
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping  
streets.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Oh! agony—that centuries should reap  
No mellow harvest! Thirteen hundred years  
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;  
And every monument the stranger meets,  
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets;  
And even the Lion all subdued appears,  
And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum, 20  
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats  
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along  
The soft waves, once all musical to song,  
That heaved beneath the moonlight with the  
    throng  
Of gondolas—and to the busy hum  
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds  
Were but the overbeating of the heart,  
And flow of too much happiness, which needs  
The aid of age to turn its course apart  
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood 30  
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.  
But these are better than the gloomy errors,  
The weeds of nations in their last decay,  
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd  
    terrors,  
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;  
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,  
The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,  
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,  
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning  
Of the cold staggering race which Death is  
    winning, 40  
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;  
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,

## Ode on Venice

To him appears renewal of his breath,  
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;  
And then he talks of life, and how again  
He feels his spirit soaring—albeit weak,  
And of the fresher air, which he would seek:  
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,  
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,  
And so the film comes o'er him, and the dizzy 50  
Chamber swims round and round, and shadows  
    busy.

At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,  
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,  
And all is ice and blackness,—and the earth  
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

There is no hope for nations!—Search the page  
    Of many thousand years—the daily scene,  
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,  
    The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,  
Hath taught us nought, or little: still we  
    lean 60

On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear  
Our strength away in wrestling with the air:  
For 't is our nature strikes us down: the beasts  
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts  
Are of as high an order—they must go  
Even where their driver goads them, though to  
    slaughter.

Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,  
What have they given your children in return?  
A heritage of servitude and woes,  
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows. 70



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

What! do not yet the red-hot plough-shares burn,  
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,  
And deem this proof of loyalty the *real*;  
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,  
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?  
All that your sires have left you, all that Time  
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,  
Spring from a different theme! Ye see and read,  
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!  
Save for the few spirits who, despite of all, 80  
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd  
By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,  
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,  
Gushing from Freedom's fountains, when the  
crowd,  
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,  
And trample on each other to obtain  
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain  
Heavy and sore, in which long yoked they  
plough'd  
The sand,—or if there sprung the yellow grain,  
'T was not for them, their necks were too much  
bow'd, 90  
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain:  
Yes! the few spirits, who, despite of deeds  
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause  
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,  
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite  
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth  
With all her seasons to repair the blight  
With a few summers, and again put forth  
Cities and generations—fair, when free—  
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee! 100

## Ode on Venice

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers  
With Freedom—godlike Triad! how ye sate!  
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours  
When Venice was an envy, might abate,  
But did not quench her spirit; in her fate  
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs knew  
And loved their hostess, nor could learn to  
hate,

Although they humbled—with the kingly few  
The many felt, for from all days and climes  
She was the voyager's worship; even her  
crimes

110

Were of softer order—born of Love,  
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,  
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests  
spread;

For these restored the Cross, that from above  
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant  
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,  
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may  
thank

The city it has clothed in chains, which clank  
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe  
The name of Freedom to her glorious  
struggles;

120

Yet she but shares with them a common woe,  
And call'd the "kingdom" of a conquering foe,  
But knows what all—and, most of all, *we* know—  
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone  
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own  
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;  
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone  
His chainless mountains, 't is but for a time, 130  
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,  
And in its own good season tramples down  
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,  
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean  
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion  
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and  
Bequeath'd—a heritage of heart and hand,  
And proud distinction from each other land,  
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's  
motion,

As if his senseless sceptre was a wand 140  
Full of the magic of exploded science—  
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,  
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,  
Above the far Atlantic!—She has taught  
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,  
The floating fence of Albion's feeble crag,  
May strike to those whose red right hands have  
bought

Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Still, still,  
for ever,  
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,  
That it should flow, and overflow, than creep 150  
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,  
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,  
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,  
Three paces, and then faltering: better be  
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,

## Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,  
Than stagnate in our marsh,—or o'er the deep  
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,  
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,  
One freeman more, America, to thee! 160

1818.

*Lord Byron.*

## HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats tho' unseen amongst us,—visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to  
flower,—  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain  
shower,  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance;  
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—  
Like memory of music fled,—  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery. 12

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate  
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
Of human thought or form,—where art thou  
gone?

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?  
Ask why the sunlight not for ever  
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,  
Why aught should fail and fade that once is  
shown,  
Why fear and dream and death and birth  
Cast on the daylight of this earth  
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope  
For love and hate, despondency and hope? 24

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever  
To sage or poet these responses given—  
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and  
Heaven,  
Remain the records of their vain endeavour,  
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not  
avail to sever,  
From all we hear and all we see,  
Doubt, chance, and mutability.  
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains  
driven,  
Or music by the night wind sent,  
Thro' strings of some still instrument,  
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,  
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream. 36

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart  
And come, for some uncertain moments lent,  
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,  
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

## Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his  
heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies,  
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—  
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,  
Like darkness to a dying flame!  
Depart not as thy shadow came,  
Depart not—lest the grave should be,  
Like life and fear, a dark reality. 48

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and  
ruin,  
And starlight wood, with fearful steps  
pursuing  
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
I called on poisonous names with which our  
youth is fed;  
I was not heard—I saw them not—  
When musing deeply on the lot  
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing  
All vital things that wake to bring  
News of birds and blossoming,—  
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;  
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy! 60

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even  
now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Each from his voiceless grave: they have in  
visioned bowers  
Of studious zeal or love's delight  
Outwatched with me the envious night—  
They know that never joy illumed my brow  
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free  
This world from its dark slavery,  
That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,  
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot  
express. 72

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
When noon is past—there is a harmony  
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,  
Which thro' the summer is not heard or seen,  
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!  
Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
Of nature on my passive youth  
Descended, to my onward life supply  
Its calm—to one who worships thee,  
And every form containing thee,  
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind  
To fear himself, and love all human kind. 84

1816. 1819.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

## TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!  
Bird thou never wert,  
That from heaven, or near it,  
Pourest thy full heart  
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

## To a Skylark

Higher still and higher  
From the earth thou springest  
Like a cloud of fire;  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever  
singing. 10

In the golden lightning  
Of the sunken sun,  
O'er which clouds are brightening,  
Thou dost float and run,  
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. 15

The pale purple even  
Melts around thy flight;  
Like a star of heaven,  
In the broad daylight  
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill  
delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows  
Of that silver sphere,  
Whose intense lamp narrows  
In the white dawn clear,  
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there. 25

All the earth and air  
With thy voice is loud,  
As, when night is bare,  
From one lonely cloud  
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is  
overflow'd. 30



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

What thou art we know not;  
What is most like thee?  
From rainbow clouds there flow not  
Drops so bright to see,  
As from thy presence showers a rain of  
melody. 35

Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden,  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded  
not: 40

Like a high-born maiden  
In a palace-tower,  
Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With music sweet as love, which overflows her  
bower: 45

Like a glow-worm golden  
In a dell of dew,  
Scattering unbeholden  
Its aerial hue  
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it  
from the view: 50

Like a rose embower'd  
In its own green leaves,  
By warm winds deflower'd,  
Till the scent it gives  
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-  
winged thieves. 55

## To a Skylark

Sound of vernal showers  
On the twinkling grass,  
Rain-awaken'd flowers,  
All that ever was  
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth  
surpass: 60

Teach us, sprite or bird,  
What sweet thoughts are thine:  
I have never heard  
Praise of love or wine  
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. 65

Chorus hymeneal,  
Or triumphal chaunt,  
Match'd with thine would be all  
But an empty vaunt,  
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden  
want. 70

What objects are the fountains  
Of thy happy strain?  
What fields, or waves, or mountains?  
What shapes of sky or plain?  
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of  
pain? 75

With thy clear keen joyance  
Languor cannot be:  
Shadow of annoyance  
Never came near thee:  
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Waking or asleep,  
Thou of death must deem  
Things more true and deep  
Than we mortals dream,  
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal  
stream? 85

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest  
thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn  
Hate, and pride, and fear;  
If we were things born  
Not to shed a tear,  
I know not how thy joy we ever should come  
near. 95

Better than all measures  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the  
ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,

## Ode to the West Wind

Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then, as I am listening  
now! 105

1820.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

## ODE TO THE WEST WIND

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's  
being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves  
dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter  
fleeing, 3

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed 6

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow 9

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odours plain and hill: 12

'Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;  
Destroyer and preserver; hear, Oh, hear! 14

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's  
    commotion,  
    Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are  
    shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and  
    Ocean, 17

Angels of rain and lightning! there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
    Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge  
    Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou  
    dirge 23

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,  
    Vaulted with all thy congregated might 26

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: Oh,  
    hear! 28

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
    The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams, 31

Beside a pumice isle in Baixæ's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
    Quivering within the wave's intenser day, 34

## Ode to the West Wind

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!  
Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers 37

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh, hear! 42

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;  
'A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O uncontrollable! if even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be 48

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed  
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have  
striven 51

'As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! 54

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd  
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and  
proud. 56

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:

What if my leaves are falling like its own!

The tumult of thy mighty harmonies 59

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one! 62

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,  
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth!  
And, by the incantation of this verse, 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth 68

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? 70

1820.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

## ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'T is not through envy of thy happy lot,  
But being too happy in thine happiness,—  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

## Ode to a Nightingale

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,  
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt  
mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world  
unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest  
dim:

20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other  
groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin,  
and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs,  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-  
morrow.

30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Already with thee! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes  
blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding  
mossy ways. 40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer  
eves. 50

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy!  
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in  
vain—  
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

## Ode

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for  
home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
The same that oft-times hath  
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 't is buried deep  
In the next valley-glades:  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep? 80

1819.

*John Keats.*

## ODE

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Have ye souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new?  
Yes, and those of heaven commune

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

With the spheres of sun and moon;  
With the noise of fountains wond'rous  
And the parle of voices thund'rous;  
With the whisper of heaven's trees  
And one another, in soft ease  
Seated on Elysian lawns  
Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns;  
Underneath large blue-bells tented,  
Where the daisies are rose-scented,  
And the rose herself has got  
Perfume which on earth is not;  
Where the nightingale doth sing  
Not a senseless, tranced thing,  
But divine melodious truth;  
Philosophic numbers smooth;  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

21

Thus ye live on high, and then  
On the earth ye live again;  
And the souls ye left behind you  
Teach us, here, the way to find you,  
Where your other souls are joying,  
Never slumber'd, never cloying.  
Here, your earth-born souls still speak  
To mortals, of their little week;  
Of their sorrows and delights;  
Of their passions and their spites;  
Of their glory and their shame;  
What doth strengthen and what maim.  
Thus ye teach us, every day,  
Wisdom, though fled far away.

## Ode on a Grecian Urn

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,  
Ye have left your souls on earth!  
Ye have souls in heaven too,  
Double-lived in regions new!

40

1820.

*'John Keats.*

## ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens  
loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild  
ecstasy?

10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not  
leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not  
    grieve;  
    She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy  
    bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!      20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
    Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
    For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
    For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
    For ever panting, and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
    That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
    A burning forehead, and a parching  
    tongue.      30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
    To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
    And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
What little town by river or sea-shore,  
    Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
    Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?  
And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
    Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell  
    Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.      40

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede  
    Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
    Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought

## Ode to Psyche

As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou  
say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to  
know.

50

1820.

*John Keats.*

## ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS ! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung  
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,  
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung  
Even into thine own soft-couch'd ear :

Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see  
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes ?

I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,  
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,  
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side  
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof  
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where  
there ran

A brooklet, scarce espied :

12

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,  
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,  
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass ;  
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;  
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,  
And ready still past kisses to outnumber  
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:  
The winged boy I knew;  
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?  
His Psyche true!

23

O latest-born and loveliest vision far  
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!  
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,  
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;  
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,  
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;  
Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan  
Upon the midnight hours;  
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
From chain-swung censer teeming;  
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

35

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,  
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,  
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,  
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;  
Yet even in these days so far retired  
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,  
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,  
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.  
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan  
Upon the midnight hours;

## Ode to Psyche

Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet  
From swung censer teeming;  
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat  
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming. 49

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane  
In some untrodden region of my mind,  
Where branched thoughts, new-grown with  
pleasant pain,  
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:  
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees  
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by  
steep;  
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and  
bees,  
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;  
And in the midst of this wide quietness  
A rosy sanctuary will I dress  
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,  
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,  
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,  
Who, breeding flowers, will never breed the  
same:  
And there shall be for thee all soft delight  
That shadowy thought can win,  
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,  
To let the warm Love in! 67

1820.

*John Keats.*



## TO AUTUMN

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-  
eaves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel  
shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their  
clammy cells. 11

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy  
hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined  
flowers:

## Fancy

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by  
hours.

22

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where  
are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river salallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly  
bourn;  
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft  
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,  
And gathering swallows twitter in the  
skies.

33

1820.

*John Keats.*

## FANCY

EVER let the Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home:  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;  
Then let winged Fancy wander  
Through the thought still spread beyond her:  
Open wide the mind's cage-door,  
She 'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

O sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 10  
And the enjoying of the Spring  
Fades as does its blossoming;  
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,  
Blushing through the mist and dew,  
Cloys with tasting: What do then?  
Sit thee by the ingle, when  
The sear fagot blazes bright,  
Spirit of a winter's night;  
When the soundless earth is muffled,  
And the caked snow is shuffled 20  
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;  
When the Night doth meet the Noon  
In a dark conspiracy  
To banish Even from her sky.  
Sit thee there, and send abroad,  
With a mind self-overawed,  
Fancy, high-commission'd:—send her!  
She has vassals to attend her:  
She will bring, in spite of frost,  
Beauties that the earth hath lost; 30  
She will bring thee, all together,  
All delights of summer weather;  
All the buds and bells of May,  
From dewy sward or thorny spray;  
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,  
With a still, mysterious stealth:  
She will mix these pleasures up  
Like three fit wines in a cup,  
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear  
Distant harvest-carols clear; 40

## Fancy

Rustle of the reaped corn;  
Sweet birds antheming the morn:  
And, in the same moment—hark!  
'T is the early April lark,  
Or the rooks, with busy caw,  
Foraging for sticks and straw.  
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold  
The daisy and the marigold;  
White-plumed lilies, and the first  
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst; 50  
Shaded hyacinth, always  
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;  
And every leaf, and every flower  
Pearled with the self-same shower.  
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep  
Meagre from its celled sleep;  
And the snake all winter-thin  
Cast on sunny bank its skin;  
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see  
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree, 60  
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest  
Quiet on her mossy nest;  
Then the hurry and alarm  
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;  
Acorns ripe down-pattering  
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;  
Everything is spoilt by use;  
Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,  
Too much gazed at? Where 's the maid 70

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Whose lip mature is ever new?  
Where 's the eye, however blue,  
Doth not weary? Where 's the face  
One would meet in every place?  
Where 's the voice, however soft,  
One would hear so very oft?  
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth  
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.  
Let, then, winged Fancy find  
Thee a mistress to thy mind: 80  
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter  
Ere the god of torment taught her  
How to frown and how to chide;  
With a waist and with a side  
White as Hebe's, when her zone  
Slipt its golden clasp, and down  
Fell her kirtle to her feet,  
While she held the goblet sweet,  
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh  
Of the Fancy's silken leash; 90  
Quickly break her prison-string,  
And such joys as these she 'll bring.—  
Let the winged Fancy roam,  
Pleasure never is at home.

1820.

*John Keats.*

## TO A WATERFOWL

WHITHER, midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps  
    of day,  
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue  
    Thy solitary way? 4

Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,  
    Thy figure floats along. 8

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
    On the chafed ocean-side? 12

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—  
The desert and illimitable air—  
    Lone wandering, but not lost. 16

All day thy wings have fanned,  
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
    Though the dark night is near. 20



## Autumn

Till shade and silence waken up as one,  
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.  
Where are the merry birds?—Away, away,  
On panting wings through the inclement skies,  
    Lest owls should prey  
    Undazzled at noon-day,  
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes. 17

Where are the blooms of Summer?—In the west,  
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,  
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest  
Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her  
    flow'rs

    To a most gloomy breast.  
Where is the pride of Summer,—the green  
    prime,—  
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—Three  
On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime  
Trembling,—and one upon the old oak-tree!

    Where is the Dryad's immortality?—  
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,  
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through  
    In the smooth holly's green eternity. 30

The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd hoard,  
The ants have brimm'd their garners with ripe  
    grain,

    And honey bees have stored  
The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells;  
The swallows all have wing'd across the main;  
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,  
    And sighs her tearful spells



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.

Alone, alone,

Upon a mossy stone,

She sits and reckons up the dead and gone,  
With the last leaves for a love-rosary;  
Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,  
Like a dim picture of the drownèd past  
In the hush'd mind's mysterious far-away,  
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last  
Into that distance, gray upon the gray. 47

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded  
Under the languid downfall of her hair;  
She wears a coronal of flowers faded  
Upon her forehead, and a face of care;—  
There is enough of wither'd everywhere  
To make her bower,—and enough of gloom;  
There is enough of sadness to invite,  
If only for the rose that died, whose doom  
Is Beauty's,—she that with the living bloom  
Of conscious checks most beautifies the light:  
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite  
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear,—  
Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;  
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,  
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul! 62

1823.

*Thomas Hood.*

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,

Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty  
nation,

Mourning when their leaders fall,

Warriors carry the warrior's pall,

And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplore?

Here, in streaming London's central roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for, 10

And the feet of those he fought for,

Echo round his bones for evermore.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,

As fits an universal woe,

Let the long long procession go,

And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,

And let the mournful martial music blow;

The last great Englishman is low.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,

Remembering all his greatness in the Past. 20

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war, 30  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.  
O good gray head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds  
that blew!  
Such was he whom we deplore. 40  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will be seen  
no more.

All is over and done:  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son.  
Let the bell be toll'd.  
Render thanks to the Giver,

## Ode on the Death of Wellington

And render him to the mould.  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river, 50  
There he shall rest for ever  
Among the wise and the bold.  
Let the bell be toll'd:  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds:  
Bright let it be with its blazon'd  
deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold.  
Let the bell be toll'd:  
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;  
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
roll'd 60  
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;  
He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:  
When he with those deep voices wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from shame;  
With those deep voices our dead captain  
taught  
The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70  
In that dread sound to the great name  
Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
In praise and in dispraise the same,  
A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd  
guest, 80

With banner and with music, with soldier  
and with priest.

With a nation weeping, and breaking on my  
rest?

Mighty Scaman, this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou famous  
man,

The greatest sailor since our world began.

Now, to the roll of muffled drums,

To thee the greatest soldier comes;

For this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea; 90

His foes were thine; he kept us free;

O give him welcome, this is he

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,

And worthy to be laid by thee;

For this is England's greatest son,

He that gain'd a hundred fights,

Nor ever lost an English gun;

This is he that far away

Against the myriads of Assaye

Clash'd with his fiery few and won; 100

And underneath another sun,

Warring on a later day,

Round affrighted Lisbon drew

## Ode on the Death of Wellington

The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth anew,  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms, 110  
Back to France with countless blows,  
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.  
Such a war had such a close.  
Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing  
wings, 120  
And barking for the thrones of kings;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler  
down;  
A day of onsets of despair!  
Dash'd on every rocky square  
Their surging charges foam'd themselves  
away;  
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and  
overthrew. 130  
So great a soldier taught us there,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world earthquake, Waterloo!  
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all, 140  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!  
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,  
Eternal honour to his name. 150

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless  
Powers;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly  
set  
His Briton in blown seas and storming  
showers,  
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept  
it ours.

## Ode on the Death of Wellington

And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
control;  
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the  
soul 160  
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
That sober freedom out of which there  
springs  
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;  
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
And drill the raw world for the march of  
mind,  
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be  
just.  
But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170  
Remember him who led your hosts;  
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;  
His voice is silent in your council-hall  
For ever; and whatever tempests lour  
For ever silent; even if they broke  
In thunder, silent; yet remember all  
He spoke among you, and the Man who  
spoke;  
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power; 180  
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow  
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;  
Whose life was work, whose language rife  
With rugged maxims hewn from life;



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Who never spoke against a foe;  
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke  
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:  
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
named;  
Truth-lover was our English Duke;  
Whatever record leap to light 190  
He never shall be shamed.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open hands  
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
Yea, let all good things await  
Him who cares not to be great,  
But as he saves or serves the state. 200  
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory:  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outcredden  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory. 210  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has  
won

## Ode on the Death of Wellington

His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.  
Such was he: his work is done.

But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand 220  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:  
Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory:  
And let the land whose hearts he saved  
from shame

For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illumined cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
him, 230  
Eternal honour to his name.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see:  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung:  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and  
brain  
Once the weight and fate of Europe  
hung. 240

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Ours the pain, be his the gain!  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane: 250  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore 260  
Make and break, and work their will;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
roll  
Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust.  
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's  
ears:  
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs  
and tears:

## To the Past

The black earth yawns: the mortal  
disappears;  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; 270  
He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
Gone; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him. 280  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852.

*Lord Tennyson.*

## TO THE PAST

WONDROUS and awful are thy silent halls,  
O kingdom of the past!  
There lie the bygone ages in their palls,  
Guarded by the shadows vast;  
There all is hushed and breathless,  
Save when some image of old error falls  
Earth worshipped once as deathless. 7

There sits drear Egypt, mid beleaguering sands,  
Half woman and half beast,  
The burnt-out torch within her mouldering hands  
That once lit all the East;  
A dotard bleared and hoary,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

There Asser crouches o'er the blackened brands  
Of Asia's long-quenched glory. 14

Still as a city buried 'neath the sea  
Thy courts and temples stand;  
Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry  
Of saints and heroes grand,  
Thy phantasms grope and shiver,  
Or watch the loose shores crumbling silently  
Into Time's gnawing river. 21

Titanic shapes with faces blank and dun,  
Of their old godhead lorn,  
Gaze on the embers of the sunken sun,  
Which they misdeem for morn;  
And yet the eternal sorrow  
In their unmonarched eyes says day is done  
Without the hope of morrow. 28

O realm of silence and of swart eclipse,  
The shapes that haunt thy gloom  
Make signs to us and move their withered lips  
Across the gulf of doom;  
Yet all their sound and motion  
Bring no more freight to us than wraiths of  
ships  
On the mirage's ocean. 35

And if sometimes a moaning wandereth  
From out thy desolate halls,  
If some grim shadow of thy living death  
Across our sunshine falls

## To the Past

And scares the world to error,  
The eternal life sends forth melodious breath  
To chase the misty terror. 42

Thy mighty clamors, wars, and world-noised  
deeds  
Are silent now in dust,  
Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds  
Beneath some sudden gust;  
Thy forms and creeds have vanished,  
Tossed out to wither like unsightly weeds  
From the world's garden banished. 49

Whatever of true life there was in thee  
Leaps in our age's veins;  
Wield still thy bent and wrinkled empery,  
And shake thine idle chains;—  
To thee thy dross is clinging,  
For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets see,  
Thy poets still are singing. 56

Here, mid the bleak waves of our strife and care,  
Float the green Fortunate Isles  
Where all thy hero-spirits dwell, and share  
Our martyrdoms and toils;  
The present moves attended  
With all of brave and excellent and fair  
That made the old time splendid. 63

1845.

*James Russell Lowell.*

## TO THE FUTURE

O LAND of Promise! from what Pisgah's height  
Can I behold thy stretch of peaceful bowers,  
Thy golden harvests flowing out of sight,  
Thy nestled homes and sun-illuminated towers?  
Gazing upon the sunset's high-heaped gold,  
Its crags of opal and of chrysolite,  
Its deeps on deeps of glory, that unfold  
Still brightening abysses,  
And blazing precipices,  
Whence but a scanty leap it seems to heaven,  
Sometimes a glimpse is given  
Of thy more gorgeous realm, thy more unstinted  
blisses. 12

O Land of Quiet! to thy shore the surf  
Of the perturbed Present rolls and sleeps;  
Our storms breathe soft as June upon thy turf  
And lure out blossoms; to thy bosom leaps,  
As to a mother's, the o'erwearied heart,  
Hearing far off and dim the toiling mart,  
The hurrying feet, the curses without  
number,  
And, circled with the glow Elysian,  
Of thine exulting vision,  
Out of its very cares woos charms for peace  
and slumber. 22

## To the Future

To thee the Earth lifts up her fettered hands  
And cries for vengeance ; with a pitying  
    smile  
Thou blessest her, and she forgets her bands,  
And her old woe-worn face a little while  
Grows young and noble ; unto thee the Oppressor  
    Looks, and is dumb with awe ;  
    The eternal law,  
Which makes the crime its own blindfold  
    redresser,  
    Shadows his heart with perilous foreboding,  
    And he can see the grim-eyed Doom  
    From out the trembling gloom  
Its silent-footed steeds towards his palace  
    goading.

34

What promises hast thou for Poet's eyes,  
Aweary of the turmoil and the wrong !  
To all their hopes what overjoyed replies !  
    What undreamed ecstasies for blissful song !  
Thy happy plains no war-trump's brawling  
    clangor  
    Disturbs, and fools the poor to hate the  
    poor ;  
The humble glares not on the high with anger ;  
    Love leaves no grudge at less, no greed for  
    more ;  
In vain strives Self the godlike sense to smother ;  
    From the soul's deeps  
    It throbs and leaps ;  
The noble 'neath foul rags beholds his long-lost  
    brother.

46



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

To thee the Martyr looketh, and his fires  
Unlock their fangs and leave his spirit free;  
To thee the Poet mid his toil aspires,  
And grief and hunger climb about his knee  
Welcome as children; thou upholdest  
The lone Inventor by his demon haunted;  
The Prophet cries to thee when hearts are  
coldest,  
And gazing o'er the midnight's bleak abyss,  
Sees the drowsed soul awaken at thy kiss,  
And stretch its happy arms and leap up disen-  
chanted. 56

Thou bringest vengeance, but so loving-kindly  
The guilty thinks it pity; taught by thee  
Fierce tyrants drop the scourges wherewith  
blindly  
Their own souls they were scarring; con-  
querors see  
With horror in their hands the accursed spear  
That tore the meek One's side on Calvary,  
And from their trophies shrink with ghastly  
fear;  
Thou, too, art the Forgiver,  
The beauty of man's soul to man revealing;  
The arrows from thy quiver  
Pierce error's guilty heart, but only pierce for  
healing. 67

Oh, whither, whither, glory-wingèd dreams,  
From out Life's sweat and turmoil would ye  
bear me?

## Ode

Shut, gates of Fancy, on your golden gleams,—  
This agony of hopeless contrast spare me!  
Fade, cheating glow, and leave me to my night!  
He is a coward, who would borrow  
A charm against the present sorrow  
From the vague Future's promise of delight:  
As life's alarums nearer roll,  
The ancestral buckler calls,  
Self-clanging from the walls  
In the high temple of the soul;  
Where are most sorrows, there the poet's  
sphere is,  
To feed the soul with patience,  
To heal its desolations  
With words of unshorn truth, with love that  
never wearies. 83

1845.

*James Russell Lowell.*

## ODE

Sung in the Town Hall, Concord,  
July 4th, 1857

O TENDERLY the haughty day  
Fills his blue urn with fire;  
One morn is in the mighty heaven,  
And one in our desire. 4

The cannon booms from town to town,  
Our pulses beat not less,  
The joy-bells chime their tidings down,  
Which children's voices bless. 8

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

For He that flung the broad blue fold  
O'er-mantling land and sea,  
One third part of the sky unrolled  
For the banner of the free. 12

The men are ripe of Saxon kind  
To build an equal state,—  
To take the statute from the mind  
And make of duty fate. 16

United States! the ages plead,—  
Present and Past in under-song,—  
Go put your creed into your deed,  
Nor speak with double tongue. 20

For sea and land don't understand,  
Nor skies without a frown  
See rights for which the one hand fights  
By the other cloven down. 24

Be just at home; then write your scroll  
Of honor o'er the sea,  
And bid the broad Atlantic roll,  
A ferry of the free. 28

And henceforth there shall be no chain,  
Save underneath the sea  
The wires shall murmur through the main  
Sweet songs of liberty. 32

The conscious stars accord above,  
The waters wild below,

## To the Unknown Eros

And under, through the cable wove,  
Her fiery errands go. 36

For He that worketh high and wise,  
Nor pauses in his plan,  
Will take the sun out of the skies  
Ere freedom out of man. 40

1867.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

## TO THE UNKNOWN EROS

WHAT rumour'd heavens are these  
Which not a poet sings,  
O, Unknown Eros? What this breeze  
Of sudden wings  
Speeding at far returns of time from inter-  
stellar space  
To fan my very face,  
And gone as fleet,  
Through delicatest ether feathering soft their  
solitary beat,  
With ne'er a light plume dropp'd, nor any  
trace  
To speak of whence they came, or whither they  
depart? 10  
And why this palpitating heart,  
This blind and unrelated joy,  
This meaningless desire,  
That moves me like the Child  
Who in the flushing darkness troubled lies,  
Inventing lonely prophecies,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Which even to his Mother mild  
He dares not tell;  
To which himself is infidel;  
His heart not less on fire 20  
With dreams impossible as wildest Arab Tale,  
(So thinks the boy,)  
With dreams that turn him red and pale,  
Yet less impossible and wild  
Than those which bashful Love, in his own  
way and hour,  
Shall duly bring to flower?  
O, Unknown Eros, sire of awful bliss,  
What portent and what Delphic word,  
Such as in form of snake forebodes the bird,  
Is this? 30  
In me life's even flood  
What eddies thus?  
What in its ruddy orbit lifts the blood,  
Like a perturbed moon of Uranus,  
Reaching to some great world in ungauged  
darkness hid;  
And whence  
This rapture of the sense  
Which, by the whisper bid,  
Reveres with obscure rite and sacramental sign  
A bond I know not of nor dimly can divine; 40  
This subject loyalty which longs  
For chains and thongs  
Woven of gossamer and adamant,  
To bind me to my unguess'd want,  
And so to lie,  
Between those quivering plumes that thro' fine  
ether pant,

## To the Unknown Eros

For hopeless, sweet eternity?  
What God unhonour'd hitherto in songs,  
Or which, that now  
Forgettest the disguise 50  
That Gods must wear who visit human eyes,  
Art Thou?  
Thou art not Amor; or, if so, yon pyre,  
That waits the willing victim, flames with  
    vestal fire;  
Nor mooned Queen of maids; or, if thou 'rt  
    she,  
Ah, then, from Thee  
Let Bride and Bridegroom learn what  
    kisses be!  
In what veil'd hymn  
Or mystic dance  
Would he that were thy Priest advance 60  
Thine earthly praise, thy glory limn?  
Say, should the feet that feel thy thought  
In double-center'd circuit run,  
In that compulsive focus, Nought,  
In this a furnace like the sun;  
And might some note of thy renown  
And high behest  
Thus in enigma be expressed:  
"There lies the crown  
Which all thy longing cures. 70  
Refuse it, Mortal, that it may be yours!  
It is a Spirit, though it seems red gold;  
And such may no man, but by shunning, hold.  
Refuse it, till refusing be despair;  
And thou shalt feel the phantom in thy hair."  
1877.

*Coventry Patmore.*



## SONNETS





## “NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CON- VENT’S NARROW ROOM”

NUNS fret not at their convent’s narrow room;  
 And hermits are contented with their cells;  
 And students with their pensive citadels;  
 Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,  
 Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,  
 High as the highest peak of Furness fells,  
 Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:  
 In truth the prison unto which we doom

Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,  
 In sundry moods, ’t was pastime to be bound  
 Within the Sonnet’s scanty plot of ground;  
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs  
     must be)  
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,  
 Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

1807.

## “SCORN NOT THE SONNET”

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frown’d,  
 Mindless of its just honours; with this key  
 Shakespeare unlock’d his heart; the melody

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;  
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;  
With it Camöens sooth'd an exile's grief;  
The Sonnet glitter'd a gay myrtle leaf  
Amid the cypress with which Dante crown'd

His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,  
It cheer'd mild Spenser, call'd from Faery-land  
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a  
damp  
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

1827.

*William Wordsworth.*

## THE SONNET

A SONNET is a moment's monument,—  
Memorial from the Soul's eternity  
To one dead deathless hour. Look that  
it be,  
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,  
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:  
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,  
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time  
see  
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.

A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals  
The soul,—its converse, to what Power  
't is due:—

## Amoretti

Whether for tribute to the august appeals  
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,  
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous  
breath,  
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

1881.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*

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## AMORETTI

Most glorious Lord of Life! that, on this day,  
Didst make Thy triumph over death and sin;  
And, having harrow'd hell, didst bring away  
Captivity thence captive, us to win:  
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin;  
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest die,  
Being with Thy dear blood clean washt from  
sin,  
May live for ever in felicity!  
And that Thy love we weighing worthily,  
May likewise love Thee for the same again;  
And for Thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,  
With love may one another entertain!  
So let us love, dear Love, like as we ought,  
—Love is the lesson which the Lord us  
taught.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### LXX

FRESH Spring, the herald of loves mighty king,  
In whose coat-armour richly are displayed  
All sorts of flowers, the which on earth do spring,  
In godly colours gloriously arrayed—  
Go to my love, where she is careless laid,  
Yet in her winters bower not well awake;  
Tell her the joyous time will not be stayed,  
Unless she do him by the forelock take;  
Bid her therefore her self soon ready make,  
To wait on Love amongst his lovely crew;  
Where every one, that misseth then her make,  
Shall be by him amerced with penance due.

Make haste, therefore, sweet love, whilst it is  
prime;

For none can call again the passèd time.

1595.

*Edmund Spenser.*

## ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st  
the skies!

How silently, and with how wan a face!

What! may it be that even in heavenly place  
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?

Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes

## Astrophel and Stella

Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case :  
I read it in thy looks ; thy languish'd grace  
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.  
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,  
Is constant love deem'd there but want  
    of wit?

Are beauties there as proud as here they be?  
Do they above love to be loved, and yet  
    Those lovers scorn whom that love doth  
    possess?  
Do they call "virtue" there—ungrate-  
    fulness?

### XXXIX

COME, Sleep ; O Sleep ! the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,  
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,  
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low ;  
With shield of proof shield me from out the  
    press

Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw :  
O make in me those civil wars to cease ;  
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.  
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,  
A chamber deaf to noise and blind of light,  
A rosy garland and a weary head ;  
And if these things, as being thine by right,  
    Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,  
    Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### LIV

BECAUSE I breathe not love to every one,  
Nor do not use set colours for to wear,  
Nor nourish special locks of vowèd hair,  
Nor give each speech a full point of a  
groan,—

The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the  
moan

Of them who in their lips Love's standard  
bear,

"What he!" say they of me, "Now I dare  
swear

He cannot love: No, no, let him alone!"

And think so still,—so Stella know my  
mind.

Profess, indeed, I do not Cupid's art;  
But you, fair maids, at length this true shall  
find,—

That his right badge is but worn in the  
heart.

Dumb swans, not chattering pies, do  
lovers prove:

They love indeed who quake to say they  
love.

1581-4. 1591.

*Sir Philip Sidney.*

## TO SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S SOUL

GIVE pardon, blessèd soul, to my bold cries,  
If they, importune, interrupt thy song,  
Which now with joyful notes thou sing'st  
among  
The angel-quiristers of th' heavenly skies.  
Give pardon eke, sweet soul, to my slow eyes,  
That since I saw thee now it is so long,  
And yet the tears that unto thee belong  
To thee as yet they did not sacrifice.  
I did not know that thou wert dead before ;  
I did not feel the grief I did sustain ;  
The greater stroke astonisheth the more ;  
Astonishment takes from us sense of pain ;  
I stood amazed when others' tears begun,  
And now begin to weep when they have done.

1595.

*Henry Constable.*

## DELIA

### XLIX

CARE-CHARMER Sleep, son of the sable Night,  
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born :  
Relieve my languish and restore the light ;  
With dark forgetting of my care, return,



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And let the day be time enough to mourn  
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:  
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn  
Without the torment of the night's untruth.  
Cease, dreams, the imag'ry of day desires,  
To model forth the passions of the morrow;  
Never let rising sun approve you liars,  
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.  
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;  
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

1592.

*Samuel Daniel.*

## IDEA

### LXI

SINCE there 's no help, come let us kiss and part,—  
Nay I have done, you get no more of me;  
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,  
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;  
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,  
And when we meet at any time again,  
Be it not seen in either of our brows  
That we one jot of former love retain.  
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,  
When his pulse failing, passion speechless lies;  
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
And innocence is closing up his eyes,  
—Now if thou would'st, when all have given  
him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet  
recover!

1619.

*Michael Drayton.*

“ WERE I AS BASE AS IS THE  
LOWLY PLAIN ”

WERE I as base as is the lowly plain,  
And you, my Love, as high as heaven above,—  
Yet should the thoughts of me, your humble  
swain,

Ascend to heaven in honour of my love.  
Were I as high as heaven above the plain,  
And you, my Love, as humble and as low  
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,—  
Wheresoe'er you were, with you my love  
should go.

Were you the earth, dear Love, and I the  
skies,—  
My love should shine on you like to the Sun,  
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,  
Till heaven wax'd blind, and till the world  
were done.

Wheresoe'er I am,—below, or else above  
you—

Wheresoe'er you are, my heart shall truly  
love you.

## SONNETS

### XII

WHEN I do count the clock that tells the time,  
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;  
When I behold the violet past prime,  
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;  
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,  
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;  
Then of thy beauty do I question make,  
That thou among the wastes of time must go,  
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,  
And die as fast as they see others grow;  
    And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make  
        defence,  
    Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee  
        hence.

### XVIII

SHALL I compare thee to a Summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And Summer's lease hath all too short a date:

## Sonnets

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course  
untrimm'd:

But thy eternal Summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his  
shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

### XXIX

WHEN, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possest,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising—  
Haply I think on thee: and then my state,  
Like to the Lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at Heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love rememb'red such wealth  
brings  
That then I scorn to change my state with  
kings.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### XXX

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time's  
waste :

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancell'd woe,  
And moan th' expense of many a vanish'd sight :  
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan,  
Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

### XXXIII

FULL many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy ;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow ;

## Sonnets

But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;  
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;  
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's  
suns staineth.

### LVII

BEING your slave, what should I do but tend  
Upon the hours and times of your desire?  
I have no precious time at all to spend,  
Nor services to do, till you require.  
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour  
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,  
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour  
When you have bid your servant once adieu;  
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought  
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,  
But like a sad slave, stay and think of nought  
Save where you are, how happy you make those.  
So true a fool is love, that in your will,  
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

### LX

LIKE as the waves make towards the pebbled  
shore,  
So do our minutes hasten to their end;  
Each changing place with that which goes before,  
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.  
Nativity, once in the main of light,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,  
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,  
And time that gave doth now his gift confound.  
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,  
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow;  
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,  
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.  
And yet, to times in hope, my verse shall stand,  
Praising Thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

### LXIV

WHEN I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced  
The rich proud cost of out-worn buried age;  
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,  
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;  
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain  
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,  
And the firm soil win of the watery main,  
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;  
When I have seen such interchange of state,  
Or state itself confounded to decay;  
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminat—  
That Time will come and take my Love away:  
—This thought is as a death, which cannot  
choose  
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

### LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell

## Sonnets

Give warning to the world that I am fled  
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell ;  
Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
The hand that writ it ; for I love you so  
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot  
If thinking on me then should make you woe.  
O if, I say, you look upon this verse  
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
But let your love even with my life decay ;  
    Lest the wise world should look into your moan,  
    And mock you with me after I am gone.

### LXXIII

THAT time of year thou may'st in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold—  
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds  
    sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
    This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love  
    more strong,  
    To love that well which thou must leave ere  
    long.



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### LXXXVII

FAREWELL! thou art too dear for my possessing,  
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:  
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;  
My bonds in thee are all determinate.  
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?  
And for that riches where is my deserving?  
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,  
And so my patent back again is swerving.  
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not  
knowing,  
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;  
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,  
Comes home again, on better judgment making.  
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter;  
In sleep, a king; but waking, no such matter.

### XCIV

THEY that have power to hurt and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,  
Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow,—  
They rightly do inherit Heaven's graces,  
And husband nature's riches from expense;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence.  
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself it only live and die;

## Sonnets

But if that flower with base infection meet,  
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:  
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;  
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

### XCVII

How like a Winter hath my absence been  
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!  
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen,  
What old December's bareness everywhere!  
And yet this time removed was Summer's time;  
The teeming Autumn, big with rich increase,  
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime  
Like widow'd wombs after their Lord's decease:  
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me  
But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;  
For Summer and his pleasures wait on thee,  
And thou away, the very birds are mute:  
Or if they sing, 't is with so dull a cheer  
That leaves look pale, dreading the Winter's  
near.

### XCVIII

FROM you have I been absent in the spring,  
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,  
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,  
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.  
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell  
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,  
Could make me any summer's story tell,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Or from their proud lap pluck them where they  
grew ;

Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,  
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose ;  
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,  
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.

Yet seem'd it Winter still, and, you away,  
As with your shadow I with these did play.

### CIV

To me, fair friend, you never can be old ;  
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,  
Such seems your beauty still. Three Winters cold  
Have from the forests shook three Summers'  
pride ;

Three beauteous springs to yellow Autumn turn'd  
In process of the seasons have I seen,  
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,  
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.  
Ah ! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,  
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived ;  
So your sweet huc, which methinks still doth  
stand,

Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived :  
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred ;  
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

### CVI

WHEN in the chronicle of wasted time  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,

## Sonnets

And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,  
In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights;  
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best  
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,  
I see their antique pen would have expressed  
Even such a beauty as you master now.  
So all their praises are but prophecies  
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;  
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,  
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:  
For we, which now behold these present  
days,  
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to  
praise.

### CIX

O NEVER say that I was false of heart,  
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.  
As easy might I from myself depart  
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie;  
That is my home of love; if I have ranged,  
Like him that travels, I return again,  
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,  
So that myself bring water for my stain.  
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd  
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,  
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,  
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;  
For nothing this wide universe I call,  
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### CXVI

LET me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height  
    be taken.  
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and  
    cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
    If this be error and upon me proved,  
    I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

### CXXIX

THE expense of Spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action; and till action, lust  
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,  
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;  
Enjoy'd no sooner but despisèd straight;  
Past reason hunted; and, no sooner had,  
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait  
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:  
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;  
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;

## Death

A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;  
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.

All this the world well knows; yet none  
knows well

To shun the heaven that leads men to this  
hell.

### CXLVI

POOR soul, the centre of my sinful earth—  
My sinful earth these rebel powers array—  
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,  
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?  
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,  
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?  
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,  
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?  
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,  
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;  
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;  
Within be fed, without be rich no more:  
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on  
men;  
And Death once dead, there 's no more dying  
then.

1594 ff. 1609.

*William Shakespeare.*

## DEATH

DEATH, be not proud, though some have called  
thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so:

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,  
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must  
flow;

And soonest our best men with thee do go—  
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!

Thou 'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and  
desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well  
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou  
then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt  
die!

1633.

*John Donne.*

### I

## “I KNOW THAT ALL' BENEATH THE MOON DECAYS”

I know that all beneath the moon decays,  
And what by mortals in this world is brought,  
In Time's great periods shall return to nought;  
The fairest states have fatal nights and days.  
I know that all the muse's heavenly lays,  
With toil of spright, which are so dearly bought,  
As idle sounds, of few, or none are sought,  
And that nought lighter is than airy praise.  
I know frail beauty like the purple flower,

## For the Baptist

To which one morn oft birth and death affords,  
That love a jarring is of minds' accords,  
Where sense and will invassal reason's power :  
    Know what I list, this all cannot me move,  
    But that, O me ! I both must write and love.  
1616.

## 2

## FOR THE BAPTIST

THE last and greatest herald of Heaven's King,  
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,  
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,  
Which he than man more harmless found and  
    mild.  
His food was locusts, and what young doth spring,  
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd ;  
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing  
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.  
There burst he forth : " All ye, whose hopes rely  
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn ;  
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn ! "  
—Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry ?  
    Only the echoes, which he made relent,  
    Rung from their marble caves " Repent !  
    Repent ! "  
1623.



## TO HIS LUTE

My lute, be as thou wast when thou didst grow  
 With thy green mother in some shady grove,  
 When immelodious winds but made thee move,  
 And birds their ramage did on thee bestow.  
 Sith that dear voice which thy sounds approve,  
 Which us'd in such harmonious strains to flow,  
 Is reft from Earth to tune those spheres above,  
 What art thou but a harbinger of woe?  
 Thy pleasing notes be pleasing notes no more,  
 But orphan wailings to the fainting ear;  
 Each stop a sigh, each sound draws forth a tear;  
 Be therefore silent as in woods before:  
 Or if that any hand to touch thee deign,  
 Like widow'd turtle, still her loss complain.

1616.

*William Drummond.*

## SONNETS

## I

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED AT THE  
AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
 Stoln on his wing my three-and-twenti'th year!  
 My hasting days fly on with full career,  
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.

## To the Nightingale

Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,  
That I to manhood am arriv'd so near;  
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be in strictest measure ev'n  
To that same lot, however mean, or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of  
Heav'n;  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

1637. 1645.

## II

## TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE, that on yon bloomy spray  
Warbl'st at eve, when all the woods are still,  
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,  
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May;  
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,  
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,  
Portend success in love; O if Jove's will  
Have linkt that amorous power to thy soft lay,

Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate  
Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh:

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

As thou from year to year hast sung too late  
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why;  
Whether the Muse, or Love call thee his mate,  
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

1645.

### III

## WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

CAPTAIN, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,  
Whose chance on these defenceless doors  
may seize,  
If deed of honour did thee ever please,  
Guard them, and him within protect from  
harms.  
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms  
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,  
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and  
seas,  
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.

Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower;  
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare  
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower  
Went to the ground: and the repeated air  
Of sad Electra's poet had the power  
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

1642. 1645.

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

CYRIACK, whose Grandsire on the Royal Bench  
 Of British Themis, with no mean applause  
 Pronounc't, and in his volumes taught our  
     laws,  
 Which others at their bar so often wrench:  
 To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench  
     In mirth, that after no repenting draws;  
     Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,  
 And what the Swede intend, and what the French.

To measure life learn thou betimes, and know  
     Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;  
 For other things mild Heav'n a time ordains,  
 And disapproves that care, though wise in show,  
     That with superfluous burden loads the day,  
 And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

1656. 1673.

TO THE LORD GENERAL  
 CROMWELL

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a  
     cloud,  
 Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
 Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

To peace and truth thy glorious way hast  
ploughed,  
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud  
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work  
pursued,  
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots  
imbrued,  
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,  
  
And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much  
remains  
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,  
Threatening to bind our souls with secular  
chains:  
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw.  
1652. 1694.

### xv

## ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more  
bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide;  
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent

## On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait."

1652. 1673.

### XVI

## ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

AVENGE, O Lord! thy slaughter'd Saints, whose  
bones  
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old  
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones  
Forget not: In thy book record their groans  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd  
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their  
moans

The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To Heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes  
sow  
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway  
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow  
A hundred-fold, who, having learnt Thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

1655. 1673.

TO CYRIACK SKINNER, UPON HIS  
BLINDNESS

CYRIACK, this three years' day, these eyes, though  
clear,

To outward view, of blemish or of spot,

Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot:

Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear

Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year;

Or man or woman. Yet I argue not

Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate one

jot

Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer

Right onward. What supports me, dost thou  
ask?

The conscience, friend, to have lost them

overplied

In Liberty's defence, my noble task,

Of which all Europe rings from side to side.

This thought might lead me through the world's  
vain mask,

Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

1655? 1694.

## ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

**METHOUGHT** I saw my late espousèd Saint  
 Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave, •  
 Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband  
     gave,  
 Rescu'd from Death by force though pale and  
     faint.  
 Mine as whom washt from spot of child-bed  
     taint,  
 Purification in the old Law did save,  
 And such, as yet once more I trust to have  
 Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,  
  
 Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:  
 Her face was vail'd; yet to my fancied sight;  
 Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd  
     So clear, as in no face with more delight.  
 But O as to embrace me she enclin'd,  
     I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my  
     night.

1658. 1673.

*John Milton.*

## TO MARY UNWIN

**MARY!** I want a lyre with other strings,  
 Such aid from heaven as some have feign'd  
     they drew,



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new  
And undebased by praise of meaner things,  
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,  
I may record thy worth with honour due,  
In verse as musical as thou art true,  
And that immortalizes whom it sings:—

But thou hast little need. There is a book  
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly  
light,  
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,  
A chronicle of actions just and bright—  
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine;  
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee  
mine.

1793.

*William Cowper.*

### I

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER,  
1802

### I

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look  
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,  
To think that now our life is only drest  
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,  
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook  
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:  
The wealthiest man among us is the best:  
No grandeur now in nature or in book

## London, 1802

Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
This is idolatry; and these we adore:  
Plain living and high thinking are no more:  
The homely beauty of the good old cause  
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
And pure religion breathing household laws.

### 2

## LONDON, 1802

### II

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
England hath need of thee: she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;  
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the  
sea:

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

# “GREAT MEN HAVE BEEN AMONG US”

## III

GREAT men have been among us ; hands that  
 penned  
 And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none :  
 The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,  
 Young Vane, and others who called Milton  
 friend.

These moralists could act and comprehend :  
 They knew how genuine glory was put on ;  
 Taught us how rightfully a nation shone  
 In splendour : what strength was, that would  
 not bend

But in magnanimous meekness. France, 't is  
 strange,  
 Hath brought forth no such souls as we had  
 then.

Perpetual emptiness ! unceasing change !  
 No single volume paramount, no code,  
 No master spirit, no determined road ;  
 But equally a want of books and men !

# "IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

## IV

It is not to be thought of that the Flood  
 Of British freedom, which, to the open sea  
 Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity  
 Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, un-  
 withstood,"

Roused though it be full often to a mood  
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,  
 That this most famous stream in bogs and  
 sands

Should perish; and to evil and to good

Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung  
 Armory of the invincible Knights of old: .  
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
 That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals  
 hold

Which Milton held.—In everything we are  
 sprung

Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

“WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN  
MEMORY ”

v

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed  
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart  
When men change swords for ledgers, and  
desert

The student's bower for gold, some fears  
unnamed

I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?

Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,  
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,  
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.

For dearly must we prize thee; we who find

In thee a bulwark for the cause of men:  
And I by my affection was beguiled:

What wonder if a Poet now and then,  
Among the many movements of his mind,  
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

1802. 1807.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER  
BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :  
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
 A sight so touching in its majesty :  
 This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
 The beauty of the morning : silent, bare,  
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples  
     lie  
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;  
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep  
 In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill ;  
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !  
 The river glideth at his own sweet will :  
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;  
 And all that mighty heart is lying still !

1802. 1807.

“IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING,  
CALM AND FREE”

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,  
The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea:  
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me  
here,  
If thou appear untouch'd by solemn thought,  
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,  
God being with thee when we know it not.

1802. 1807.

## ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;  
 And was the safeguard of the West: the worth  
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,  
 Venice, the eldest child of liberty.  
 She was a maiden City, bright and free;  
 No guile seduced, no force could violate;  
 And when she took unto herself a mate,  
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

And what if she had seen those glories fade,  
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;  
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
 When her long life hath reach'd its final day:  
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the  
     Shade  
 Of that which once was great has pass'd away.  
*1802. 1807.*



“THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH  
WITH US”

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :  
 Little we see in Nature that is ours ;  
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !  
 The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;  
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
 And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers ;  
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;

It moves us not.—Great God ! I 'd rather be  
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;  
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less  
 forlorn ;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

1806. 1807.

## TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,  
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees  
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and  
seas,  
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and  
pure sky;  
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie  
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies  
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard  
trees;  
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more,  
I lay,  
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any  
stealth:  
So do not let me wear to-night away:  
Without Thee what is all the morning's  
wealth?  
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,  
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous  
health!

1806. 1807.

# THOUGHTS OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,  
 One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :  
 In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
 They were thy chosen music, Liberty !  
 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee  
 Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly  
 striven :  
 Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art  
 driven,  
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :  
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ;  
 For, high-soul'd Maid, what sorrow would  
 it be  
 That Mountain floods should thunder as  
 before,  
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,  
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !  
 1807.

“SURPRISED BY JOY—IMPATIENT  
AS THE WIND”

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind  
 I turned to share the transport—Oh! with  
 whom  
 But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,  
 That spot which no vicissitude can find?  
 Love, faithful love, recall'd thee to my mind—  
 But how could I forget thee? Through  
 what power,  
 Even for the least division of an hour,  
 Have I been so beguiled as to be blind

To my most grievous loss?—That thought's  
 return  
 Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,  
 Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,  
 Knowing my heart's best treasure was  
 no more;  
 That neither present time, nor years unborn  
 Could to my sight that heavenly face  
 restore.

1815.

## WHY ART THOU SILENT

WHY art thou silent! Is thy love a plant  
 Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air  
 Of absence withers what was once so fair?  
 Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?  
 Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—  
 Bound to thy service with unceasing care,  
 The mind's least generous wish a mendicant  
 For nought but what thy happiness could  
 spare.

Speak,—though this soft warm heart, once  
 free to hold  
 A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,  
 Be left more desolate, more dreary cold  
 Than a forsaken birds-nest fill'd with snow  
 'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—  
 Speak, that my torturing doubts their end  
 may know!

1835.

# INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

## XLIII

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,  
 With ill-matched aims the Architect who  
     planned—  
 Albeit labouring for a scanty band  
 Of white robed Scholars only—this immense  
 And glorious Work of fine intelligence!  
 Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the  
     lore  
 Of nicely-calculated less or more;  
 So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense

These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof  
 Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand  
     cells,  
 Where light and shade repose, where music  
     dwells  
 Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;  
 Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth  
     proof  
 That they were born for immortality.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### XLIV

What awful perspective! while from our sight  
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide  
Their Portraitures, their stone-work glimmers,  
dyed

In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.  
Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremite,  
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,  
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,  
Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!—

But, from the arms of silence—list! O list!  
The music bursteth into second life;  
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed  
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;  
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye  
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

### XLV

They dreamt not of a perishable home  
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of  
fear.  
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;  
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam:  
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam  
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the  
wreath  
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path  
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome

## Night

Hath typified by reach of daring art  
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,  
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread  
As now, when She hath also seen her breast  
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part  
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

1822.

*William Wordsworth.*

## NIGHT

MYSTERIOUS Night! when our first parent knew  
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,  
Did he not tremble for this goodly frame,  
This glorious canopy of light and blue?  
But through a curtain of translucent dew,  
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
Hesperus with the host of heaven came:  
And lo! Creation broadened to man's view!

Who could have guessed such darkness lay  
concealed  
Within thy beams, O Sun? or who divined,  
When bud and flower and insect lay revealed,  
Thou to such countless worlds had'st made us  
blind?  
Why should we then shun Death with anxious  
strife?  
If Light conceals so much, wherefore not life?

1828.

*Joseph Blanco White.*



## SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL spirit of the chainless mind!

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,

For there thy habitation is the heart,—

The heart which love of thee alone can bind;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned;—

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless  
gloom,—

Their country conquers with their martyrdom,  
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,

And thy sad floor an altar,—for 't was trod,  
Until his very steps have left a trace

Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,  
By Bonnivard!—May none those marks efface!

For they appeal from tyranny to God.

1816.

*Lord Byron.*

## OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT

I MET a traveller from an antique land

Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of  
stone

Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand

Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown

## Chapman's Homer

And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless  
things,  
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that  
fed ;

And on the pedestal these words appear :  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

1819.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

### I

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAP- MAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his  
demesne :

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :

—Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken ;

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

1817.

### 2

## ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

THE poetry of earth is never dead :

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown  
mead ;

That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead

In summer luxury,—he has never done

With his delights ; for when tired out with  
fun,

He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never :

On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there  
shrills

The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,

And seems to one, in drowsiness half lost,

The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

1817.

## ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

My spirit is too weak—mortality  
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,  
 And each imagin'd pinnacle and steep  
 Of godlike hardship tells me I must die  
 Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.  
 Yet 't is a gentle luxury to weep  
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,  
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.

Such dim-conceiv'd glories of the brain  
 Bring round the heart an undescribable feud;  
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,  
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the  
     rude  
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main—  
 A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

1817.

## ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around  
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
 Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell  
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
 Often 't is in such gentle temper found,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
Be moved for days from whence it sometime  
fell,

When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.

Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,  
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;  
Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,  
Or fed too much with cloying melody,—  
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood  
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

1817.

### 5

## “WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE”

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
Before high piléd books, in charactry,  
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;  
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And think that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!  
That I shall never look upon thee more,  
Never have relish in the faery power  
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

1817. 1848.

“ BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE  
STEADFAST AS THOU ART ”

BRIGHT star ! would I were steadfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

1820. 1848.

*John Keats.*

I

TO SHAKESPEARE

THE soul of man is larger than the sky,  
Deeper than ocean, or the abysmal dark  
Of the unfathomed centre. Like that ark,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,  
O'er the drowned hills, the human family,  
And stock reserved of every living kind,  
So, in the compass of the single mind,  
The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie,  
That make all worlds. Great poet, 't was thy  
art  
To know thyself, and in thyself to be  
Whate'er love, hate, ambition, destiny,  
Or the firm fatal purpose of the heart  
Can make of man. Yet thou wert still the  
same,  
Serene of thought, unhurt by thy own flame.  
1833.

2-3

## PRAYER

I

THERE is an awful quiet in the air,  
And the sad earth, with moist imploring eye,  
Looks wide and wakeful at the pondering sky,  
Like Patience slow subsiding to Despair.  
But see, the blue smoke as a voiceless prayer,  
Sole witness of a secret sacrifice,  
Unfolds its tardy wreaths, and multiplies  
Its soft chameleon breathings in the rare  
Capacious ether,—so it fades away,  
And nought is seen beneath the pendent blue,

## “ Multum Dilexit ”

The undistinguishable waste of day.

So have I dreamed ! oh may the dream be true !

That praying souls are purged from Mortal  
hue,

And grow as pure as He to whom they pray.

### II

BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.

Pray, if thou canst, with hope ; but ever pray,

Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay ;

Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.

Far is the time, remote from human sight,

When war and discord on the earth shall cease ;

Yet every prayer for universal peace

Avails the blessed time to expedite.

Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,

Though it be what thou canst not hope to see :

Pray to be perfect, though material leaven

Forbid the spirit so on earth to be ;

But if for any wish thou dardest not pray,

Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

1851.

### 4

## “ MULTUM DILEXIT ”

SHE sat and wept beside his feet ; the weight

Of sin oppress'd her heart ; for all the blame,

And the poor malice of the worldly shame,



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

To her was past, extinct, and out of date :  
Only the sin remain'd,—the leprous state ;  
    She would be melted by the heat of love,  
    By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove  
And purge the silver ore adulterate.

She sat and wept, and with her untress'd hair  
    Still wip'd the feet she was so blessed to touch ;  
And He wip'd off the soiling of despair  
    From her sweet soul, because she lov'd so  
    much.

I am a sinner, full of doubts and fears :  
Make me a humble thing of love and tears.

1851.

*Hartley Coleridge.*

### I

## FALSE POETS AND TRUE

To Wordsworth

Look how the lark soars upward and is gone,  
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky !  
His voice is heard, but body there is none  
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.  
So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die  
Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious shroud.  
And Earth inherits the rich melody  
Like raining music from the morning cloud.  
Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud  
Their voices reach us through the lapse of  
space :

## “Love, Dearest Lady”

The noisy day is deafened by a crowd  
Of undistinguished birds, a twittering race;  
But only lark and nightingale forlorn  
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

1824?

### 2

## “LOVE, DEAREST LADY, SUCH AS I WOULD SPEAK”

### IX

LOVE, dearest Lady, such as I would speak,  
Lives not within the humour of the eye;—  
Not being but an outward phantasy,  
That skims the surface of a tinted cheek,—  
Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak  
As if the rose made summer,—and so lie  
Amongst the perishable things that die,  
Unlike the love which I would give and seek:

Whose health is of no hue—to feel decay  
With cheeks’ decay, that have a rosy prime.  
Love is its own great loveliness alway,  
And takes new lustre from the touch of time;  
Its bough owns no December and no May,  
But bears its blossom into Winter’s clime.

1827.

*Thomas Hood.*

## SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

### I

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung  
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-  
for years,  
Who each one in a gracious hand appears  
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:  
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,  
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,  
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,  
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung

A shadow across me. Straightway I was  
'ware,

So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move  
Behind me, and drew me backward by the  
hair;

And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—  
'Guess now who holds thee?'—"Death,"

I said. But, there,  
The silver answer rang,—“Not Death,  
but Love.”

## Sonnets from the Portuguese

### III

UNLIKE are we, unlike, O princely Heart!  
Unlike our uses and our destinies.  
Our ministering two angels look surprise  
On one another, as they strike athwart  
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art  
A guest for queens to social pageantries,  
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes  
Than tears even can make mine, to play thy  
part

Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do  
With looking from the lattice-lights at me,  
A poor, tired, wandering singer, singing  
through  
The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?  
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the  
dew,—  
And Death must dig the level where these  
agree.

### VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand  
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore  
Alone upon the threshold of my door  
Of individual life, I shall command  
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand  
Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
Without the sense of that which I forbore—  
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in  
mine

With pulses that beat double. What I do  
And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
Must taste of its own grapes. And when  
I sue

God for myself, He hears that name of thine,  
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

### XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought  
Except for love's sake only. Do not say  
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way  
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought  
That falls in well with mine, and certes  
brought

A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—  
For these things in themselves, Belovèd,  
may

Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so  
wrought,

May be unwrought so. Neither love me for  
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks  
dry,—

A creature might forget to weep, who bore  
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!  
But love me for love's sake, that evermore  
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

## Sonnets from the Portuguese

### XVIII

I NEVER gave a lock of hair away  
To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,  
Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully,  
I ring out to the full brown length and say  
'Take it.' My day of youth went yesterday;  
My hair no longer bounds to my foot's  
glee,  
Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,  
As girls do, any more: it only may

Now shade on two pale cheeks the mark of  
tears,  
Taught drooping from the head that hangs  
aside  
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-  
shears  
Would take this first, but Love is justified,—  
Take it thou,—finding pure, from all those  
years,  
The kiss my mother left here when she died.

### XXII

WHEN our two souls stand up erect and strong,  
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,  
Until the lengthening wings break into fire  
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong  
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Be here contented? Think. In mounting  
higher,  
The angels would press on us and aspire  
To drop some golden orb of perfect song

Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay  
Rather on earth, Belovèd,—where the unfit  
Contrarious moods of men recoil away  
And isolate pure spirits, and permit  
A place to stand and love in for a day,  
With darkness and the death-hour round-  
ing it.

### XXIII

Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead,  
Wouldst thou miss any life in losing mine?  
And would the sun for thee more coldly  
shine  
Because of grave-damps falling round my head?  
I marvelled, my Belovèd, when I read  
Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine—  
But . . . so much to thee? Can I pour thy  
wine  
While my hands tremble? Then my soul,  
instead

Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range.  
Then, love me, Love! look on me—breathe  
on me!  
As brighter ladies do not count it strange,  
For love, to give up acres and degree,

## Sonnets from the Portuguese

I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange  
My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth  
with thee!

### XXXV

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange  
And be all to me? Shall I never miss  
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss  
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,  
When I look up, to drop on a new range  
Of walls and floors, another home than this?  
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is  
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?

That 's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,  
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things  
prove;  
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.  
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.  
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,  
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

### XXXVIII

FIRST time he kissed me, he but only kissed  
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write;  
And ever since, it grew more clean and white,  
Slow to world-greetings, quick with its  
“Oh, list,”  
When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,  
Than that first kiss. The second passed in  
height  
The first, and sought the forehead, and half  
missed,

Half falling on the hair. O beyond need!  
That was the chrism of love, which love's own  
crown,  
With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.  
The third upon my lips was folded down  
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,  
I have been proud and said, "My love, my  
own."

### XLI

I THANK all who have loved me in their hearts,  
With thanks and love from mine. Deep  
thanks to all  
Who paused a little near the prison-wall  
To hear my music in its louder parts  
Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's  
Or temple's occupation, beyond call.  
But thou, who, in my voice's sink and fall  
When the sob took it, thy divinest Art's

Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot  
To hearken what I said between my tears, . . .  
Instruct me how to thank thee! Oh, to shoot  
My soul's full meaning into future years,  
That *they* should lend it utterance, and salute  
Love that endures, from Life that disappears!

## Dante

### XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and  
height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's  
faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the  
breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God  
choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.  
[1847.] 1850. *Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

### I

## DANTE

TUSCAN, that wanderest through the realms of  
gloom,  
With thoughtful pace, and sad, majestic eyes,  
Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul arise,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Like Farinata from his fiery tomb.  
Thy sacred song is like the trump of doom;  
    Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,  
    What soft compassion glows, as in the skies  
The tender stars their clouded lamps relume!

Methinks I see thee stand, with pallid cheeks  
    By Fra Hilario in his diocese,  
As up the convent-walls, in golden streaks,  
    The ascending sunbeams mark the day's  
    decrease;  
And, as he asks what there the stranger seeks,  
    Thy voice along the cloister whispers,  
    "Peace!"

1845.

2-7

## DIVINA COMMEDIA

### I

OFt have I seen at some cathedral door  
    A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,  
    Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet  
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor  
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;  
    Far off the noises of the world retreat;  
    The loud vociferations of the street  
Become an undistinguishable roar.

## Divina Commedia

So, as I enter here from day to day,  
And leave my burden at this minster gate,  
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,  
The tumult of the time disconsolate  
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,  
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

### II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these  
towers!  
This crowd of statues, in whose folded  
sleeves  
Birds build their nests; while canopied  
with leaves  
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,  
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!  
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled  
caves  
Watch the dead Christ between the living  
thieves,  
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!

Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,  
What exultations trampling on despair,  
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of  
wrong,  
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,  
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,  
This mediæval miracle of song!

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom  
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!  
And strive to make my steps keep pace with  
thine.  
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;  
The congregation of the dead make room  
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;  
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of  
pine  
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.

From the confessionals I hear arise  
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,  
And lamentations from the crypts below;  
And then a voice celestial that begins  
With the pathetic words, "Although your  
sins  
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

### IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,  
She stands before thee, who so long ago  
Filled thy young heart with passion and  
the woe  
From which thy song and all its splendors  
came;  
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy  
name,

## Divina Commedia

The ice about thy heart melts as the snow  
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow  
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.

Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,  
As if the dawn on some dark forest cast,  
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;  
Lethè and Eunoë—the remembered dream  
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last  
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

### v

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze  
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,  
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;  
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays  
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,  
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;  
And Beatrice again at Dante's side  
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of  
praise.

And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs  
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love  
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;  
And the melodious bells among the spires  
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven  
above  
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

# Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

## VI

O star of morning and of liberty!  
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines  
Above the darkness of the Apennines,  
Forerunner of the day that is to be!  
The voices of the city and the sea,  
The voices of the mountains and the pines,  
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines  
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!

Thy fame is blown abroad from all the  
heights,  
Through all the nations, and a sound is  
heard,  
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,  
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,  
In their own language hear thy wondrous  
word,  
And many are amazed and many doubt.  
1867.

## 8

### NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,  
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,  
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,  
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,

## Letty's Globe

Still gazing at them through the open door,  
Nor wholly reassured and comforted  
By promises of others in their stead,  
Which, though more splendid, may not  
please him more;

So Nature deals with us, and takes away  
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand  
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go  
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,  
Being too full of sleep to understand  
How far the unknown transcends the  
what we know.

1876.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

### I

## LETTY'S GLOBE

WHEN Letty had scarce pass'd her third glad  
year,  
And her young artless words began to flow,  
One day we gave the child a colour'd sphere  
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and  
know,  
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.  
She patted all the world; old empires peep'd  
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand  
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she  
leap'd,  
And laugh'd and prattled in her world-wide  
bliss;



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

But when we turn'd her sweet unlearnèd eye  
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry,  
"Oh! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!"  
And while she hid all England with a kiss,  
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

1880.

2-3

### MARY—A REMINISCENCE

I

SHE died in June, while yet the woodbine sprays  
Waved o'er the outlet of this garden-dell;  
Before the advent of these Autumn days  
And dark unblossom'd verdure. As befel,  
I from my window gazed, yearning to forge  
Some comfort out of anguish so forlorn;  
The dull rain stream'd before the bloomless  
gorge,  
By which, erewhile, on each less genial morn,  
Our Mary pass'd, to gain her shelter'd lawn,  
With Death's disastrous rose upon her cheek.  
How often had I watch'd her, pale and meek,  
Pacing the sward! and now I daily seek  
The track, by those slow pausing footsteps worn,  
How faintly worn! though trodden week by  
week.

## Her First-Born

### II

AND when I seek the chamber where she dwelt,  
Near one loved chair a well-worn spot I see,  
Worn by the shifting of a feeble knee  
While the poor head bow'd lowly—it would melt  
The worldling's heart with instant sympathy:  
The match-box and the manual, lying there,  
Those sad sweet signs of wakefulness and  
    prayer,  
Are darling tokens of the Past to me:  
The little rasping sound of taper lit  
At midnight, which aroused her slumbering bird:  
The motion of her languid frame that stirr'd  
For ease in some new posture—tho' a word  
Perchance, of sudden anguish, follow'd it;  
All this how often had I seen and heard!  
1868.

### 4

## HER FIRST-BORN

It was her first sweet child, her heart's delight:  
And, though we all foresaw his early doom,  
We kept the fearful secret out of sight;  
We saw the canker, but she kiss'd the bloom.  
And yet it might not be: we could not brook  
To vex her happy heart with vague alarms,  
To blanch with fear her fond intrepid look,  
Or send a thrill through those encircling arms.  
She smil'd upon him, waking or at rest:

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

She could not dream her little child would die:  
She toss'd him fondly with an upward eye:  
She seem'd as buoyant as a summer spray,  
That dances with a blossom on its breast,  
Nor knows how soon it will be borne away.

1880.

### 5

## THE LATTICE AT SUNRISE

As on my bed at dawn I mus'd and pray'd,  
I saw my lattice prank'd upon the wall,  
The flaunting leaves and flitting birds  
withal—

A sunny phantom interlaced with shade;  
"Thanks be to heaven," in happy mood I said,  
"What sweeter aid my matins could befall  
Than the fair glory from the East hath made?  
What holy sleights hath God, the Lord of all,

To bid us feel and see! we are not free

To say we see not, for the glory comes  
Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea  
His lustre pierceth through the midnight  
glooms

And, at prime hour, behold! He follows me  
With golden shadows to my secret rooms."

1864.

## THE HARVEST MOON

How peacefully the broad and golden moon  
Comes up to gaze upon the reaper's toil!  
That they who own the land for many a mile,  
May bless her beams, and they who take the  
boon  
Of scatter'd ears; oh! beautiful! how soon  
The dusk is turn'd to silver without soil,  
Which makes the fair sheaves fairer than at  
noon,  
And guides the gleaner to his slender spoil;

So, to our souls, the Lord of love and might  
Sends harvest-hours, when daylight disappears;  
When age and sorrow, like a coming night,  
Darken our field of work with doubts and  
fears,  
He times the presence of His heavenly light  
To rise up softly o'er our silver hairs.

1873.

*Charles Tennyson Turner.*

## THE NEW WORLD

THE night that has no star lit up by God,  
The day that round men shines who still are  
    blind,  
The earth their grave-turned feet for ages trod,  
And sea swept over by His mighty wind,—  
All these have passed away, the melting dream  
That flitted o'er the sleeper's half-shut eye,  
When touched by morning's golden-darting  
    beam;  
And he beholds around the earth and sky  
That ever real stands, the rolling shores  
And heaving billows of the boundless main,  
That show, though time is past, no trace of  
    years.  
And earth restored he sees as his again,  
    The earth that fades not and the heavens  
        that stand,  
    Their strong foundations laid by God's  
        right hand.

1839.

*Jones Very.*

## SONNETS

### III

I WOULD not have this perfect love of ours  
Grow from a single root, a single stem,  
Bearing no goodly fruit, but only flowers  
That idly hide Life's iron diadem:  
It should grow alway like that Eastern tree  
Whose limbs take root and spread forth constantly;  
That love for one, from which there doth not  
spring  
Wide love for all, is but a worthless thing.  
Not in another world, as poets prate,  
Dwell we apart, above the tide of things,  
High floating o'er earth's clouds on facry  
wings;  
But our pure love doth ever elevate  
Into a holy bond of brotherhood  
All earthly things, making them pure and  
good.

1840.

### XXIV

#### THE STREET

THEY pass me by like shadows, crowds on  
crowds,  
Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Hugging their bodies around them, like thin  
shrouds

Wherein their souls were buried long ago:  
They trampled on their youth, and faith, and  
love,

They cast their hope of human-kind away,  
With Heaven's clear messages they madly strove,  
And conquered,—and their spirits turned to clay:  
Lo! how they wander round the world, their  
grave,

Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,  
Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,  
“We, only, truly live, but ye are dead.”  
Alas! poor fools, the anointed eye may trace  
A dead soul's epitaph in every face!

1843.

### IX

My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die;  
Albeit I ask no fairer life than this.  
Whose numbering-clock is still thy gentle kiss,  
While Time and Peace with hands enlockèd fly;  
Yet care I not where in Eternity  
We live and love, well knowing that there is  
No backward step for those who feel the bliss  
Of Faith as their most lofty yearnings high:

Love hath so purified my heart's strong core,  
Meseems I scarcely should be startled, even

## Quiet Work

To find, some morn, that thou hadst gone before;  
Since, with thy love, this knowledge too was  
    given,  
Which each calm day doth strengthen more and  
    more,  
That they who love are but one step from  
    Heaven.

1841.

*James Russell Lowell.*

### I

## QUIET WORK

ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,  
    One lesson which in every wind is blown,  
    One lesson of two duties kept at one  
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—  
Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity!  
    Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows  
    Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,  
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,  
    Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,  
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,  
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;  
    Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,  
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

1849.



## SHAKESPEARE

OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free.  
 We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,  
 Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,  
 Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,  
 Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,  
 Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-  
 place,  
 Spares but the cloudy border of his base  
 To the foil'd searching of mortality ;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams  
 know,  
 Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-  
 secure,  
 Didst tread on earth unguess'd at,—Better so !  
 All pains the immortal spirit must endure,  
 All weakness which impairs, all griefs which  
 bow,  
 Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

1849.

## WORLDLY PLACE

*EVEN in a palace, life may be led well!*

So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,  
 Marcus Aurelius. But the stifling den  
 Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,  
 Our freedom for a little bread we sell,  
 And drudge under some foolish master's ken  
 Who rates us if we peer outside our pen—  
 Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell?

*Even in a palace!* On his truth sincere,

Who spoke these words, no shadow ever  
 came;

And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame  
 Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,  
 I 'll stop, and say: "There were no succour  
 here!

The aids to noble life are all within."

1867.

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

HE saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save.  
 So rang Tertullian's sentence, on the side  
 Of that unpitying Phrygian sect which cried:  
 "Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,  
 Who sins, once wash'd by the baptismal  
 wave."—

So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she  
 sigh'd,  
 The infant Church! of love she felt the tide  
 Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent  
 grave.

And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,  
 With eye suffused but heart inspired true,  
 On those walls subterranean, where she hid  
 Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,  
 She her Good Shepherd's hasty image  
 drew—

And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.

1867.

*Matthew Arnold.*

## THE HOUSE OF LIFE

### IV. LOVESIGHT

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one?

When in the light the spirits of mine eyes  
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize  
The worship of that Love through thee made  
known?

Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)  
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies  
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,  
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see  
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,  
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—

How then should sound upon Life's dark-  
ening slope  
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of  
Hope,  
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

1870.

### V. HEART'S HOPE

By what word's power, the key of paths untrod,  
Shall I the difficult deeps of Love explore,  
Till parted waves of Song yield up the shore

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Even as that sea which Israel crossed dryshod?  
For lo! in some poor rhythmic period,

Lady, I fain would tell how evermore

Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor  
Thee from myself, neither our love from God.

Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine,  
would I

Draw from one loving heart such evidence

As to all hearts all things shall signify;

Tender as dawn's first hill-fire, and intense

As instantaneous penetrating sense,

In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs gone by.

1881.

### XII. THE LOVERS' WALK

SWEET twining hedgeflowers wind-stirred in no  
wise

On this June day; and hand that clings in  
hand:—

Still glades; and meeting faces scarcely  
fann'd:—

An osier-odored stream that draws the skies  
Deep to its heart; and mirrored eyes in eyes:—

Fresh hourly wonder o'er the Summer land  
Of light and cloud; and two souls softly  
spann'd

With one o'erarching heaven of smiles and  
sighs:—

## The House of Life

Even such their path, whose bodies lean unto  
Each other's visible sweetness amorously,—  
Whose passionate hearts lean by Love's high  
decree

Together on his heart for ever true,  
As the cloud-foaming firmamental blue  
Rests on the blue line of a foamless sea.

1881.

### XIX. SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—  
The finger-points look through like rosy  
blooms:

Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams  
and glooms

'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.  
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,  
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge  
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn  
hedge.

'T is visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly  
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:—  
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from  
above.

Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,  
This close-companioned inarticulate hour  
When twofold silence was the song of love.

1881.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

### XXVII. HEART'S COMPASS

SOMETIMES thou seem'st not as thyself alone,  
But as the meaning of all things that are ;  
A breathless wonder, shadowing forth afar  
Some heavenly solstice hushed and halcyon ;  
Whose unstirred lips are music's visible tone ;  
Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul unbar,  
Being of its furthest fires oracular ;—  
The evident heart of all life sown and mown.

Even such love is ; and is not thy name Love ?  
Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends apart  
All gathering clouds of Night's ambiguous  
art ;  
Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes  
above ;  
And simply, as some gage of flower or glove,  
Stakes with a smile the world against thy  
heart.

1881.

### XXXI. HER GIFTS

HIGH grace, the dower of queens ; and there-  
withal  
Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity ;  
A glance like water brimming with the sky  
Or hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall ;

## The House of Life

Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthrall  
The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms  
imply

All music and all silence held thereby;  
Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal;

A round reared neck, meet column of Love's  
shrine

To cling to when the heart takes sanctuary;  
Hands which for ever at Love's bidding be,  
And soft-stirred feet still answering to his  
sign:—

These are her gifts, as tongue may tell them  
o'er.

Breathe low her name, my soul; for that means  
more.

1881.

### XXXIV. THE DARK GLASS

Not I myself know all my love for thee:

How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh  
To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday?  
Shall birth and death, and all dark names  
that be

As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,  
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with  
spray;

And shall my sense pierce love,—the last  
relay

And ultimate outpost of eternity?



## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?

One murmuring shell he gathers from the  
sand,—

One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.  
Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest  
call

And veriest touch of powers primordial  
That any hour-girt life may understand.

1881.

### LVI. TRUE WOMAN—I. HERSELF

To be a sweetness more desired than Spring;  
A bodily beauty more acceptable  
Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns  
the fell;  
To be an essence more environing  
Than wine's drained juice; a music ravishing  
More than the passionate pulse of Philomel;—  
To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's swell  
That is the flower of life:—how strange a thing!

How strange a thing to be what Man can know  
But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own screen  
Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliness  
glow;  
Closely withheld, as all things most unseen,—  
The wave-bowered pearl,—the heart-shaped  
seal of green  
That flecks the snowdrop underneath the snow.

## The House of Life

### LVII. TRUE WOMAN—II. HER LOVE

SHE loves him; for her infinite soul is Love,  
And he her lodestar. Passion in her is  
A glass facing his fire, where the bright bliss  
Is mirrored, and the heat returned. Yet move  
That glass, a stranger's amorous flame to prove,  
And it shall turn, by instant contraries,  
Ice to the moon; while her pure fire to his  
For whom it burns, clings close i' the heart's  
alcove.

Lo! they are one. With wifely breast to breast  
And circling arms, she welcomes all command  
Of love,—her soul to answering ardors fann'd:  
Yet as morn springs or twilight sinks to rest,  
Ah! who shall say she deems not loveliest  
The hour of sisterly sweet hand-in-hand?

### LVIII. TRUE WOMAN—III. HER HEAVEN

IF to grow old in Heaven is to grow young,  
(As the Seer saw and said,) then blest were he  
With youth for evermore, whose heaven  
should be  
True Woman, she whom these weak notes have  
sung,  
Here and hereafter,—choir-strains of her tongue,—  
Sky-spaces of her eyes,—sweet signs that flee  
About her soul's immediate sanctuary,—  
Were Paradise all uttermost worlds among.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill  
Like any hillflower; and the noblest troth  
Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's promise  
clothe

Even yet those lovers who have cherished still  
This test for love:—in every kiss sealed fast  
To feel the first kiss and forbode the last.

1881.

### XCVII. A SUPERScription

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;  
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;  
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell  
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;  
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen  
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by  
my spell  
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,  
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart  
One moment through thy soul the soft surprise  
Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath  
of sighs,—  
Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart  
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart  
Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

1870.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*

## ONE CERTAINTY

VANITY of vanities, the Preacher saith,  
All things are vanity. The eye and ear  
Cannot be filled with what they see and hear.  
Like early dew, or like the sudden breath  
Of wind, or like the grass that withereth,  
Is man, tossed to and fro by hope and fear:  
So little joy hath he, so little cheer,  
Till all things end in the long dust of death.

To-day is still the same as yesterday,  
To-morrow also even as one of them;  
And there is nothing new under the sun:  
Until the ancient race of Time be run,  
The old thorns shall grow out of the old  
stem,  
And morning shall be cold and twilight grey.

1849.

*Christina Georgina Rossetti.*

## “BETWEEN THE SUNKEN SUN AND THE NEW MOON”<sup>1</sup>

BETWEEN the sunken sun and the new moon,  
I stood in fields through which a rivulet ran  
With scarce perceptible motion, not a span  
Of its smooth surface trembling to the tune

<sup>1</sup>Copyright, 1882, D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

Of sunset breezes: "O delicious boon,"  
I cried, "of quiet! wise is Nature's plan,  
Who, in her realm, as in the soul of man,  
Alternates storm with calm, and the loud noon

With dewy evening's soft and sacred lull:  
Happy the heart that keeps its twilight hour,  
And, in the depths of heavenly peace reclined,  
Loves to commune with thoughts of tender  
power;  
Thoughts that ascend, like angels beautiful,  
A shining Jacob's ladder of the mind."

1855.

*Paul Hamilton Hayne.*

## HOW MY SONG OF HER BEGAN

God made my lady lovely to behold;  
Above the painter's dream he set her face,  
And wrought her body in divinest grace,  
He touch'd the brown hair with a sense of  
gold,  
And in the perfect form He did enfold  
What was alone as perfect, the sweet heart;  
Knowledge most rare to her He did impart,  
And fill'd with love and worship all her days.

And then God thought Him how it would be  
well  
To give her music, and to Love He said,

## How My Song of Her Began

'Bring thou some minstrel now that he may tell  
How fair and sweet a thing my hands have  
made."

Then at Love's call I came, bow'd down  
my head,

And at His will my lyre grew audible.

1875.

*Philip Bourke Marston.*



## EPIGRAMS





## RESPICE FINEM

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;  
Judge not the play before the play is done  
Her plot hath many changes; every day  
Speaks a new scene; the last act crowns  
the play.

1635.

*Francis Quarles.*

## FAME

HER house is all of echo made  
Where never dies the sound;  
And as her brows the clouds invade,  
Her feet do strike the ground.

*Ben Jonson.*

## “HOW NEAR TO GOOD IS WHAT IS FAIR”

How near to good is what is fair!  
Which we no sooner see,  
But with the lines and outward air  
Our senses taken be.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

We wish to see it still, and prove  
What ways we may deserve;  
We court, we praise, we more than love:  
We are not grieved to serve.

1616.

*Ben Jonson.*

### A BURNT SHIP

Out of a fired ship, which by no way  
But drowning could be rescued from the flame,  
Some men leap'd forth, and ever as they came  
Near the foes' ships, did by their shot decay:  
So all were lost, which in the ship were found,  
They in the sea being burnt, they in the burnt  
ship drowned.

1633.

*John Donne.*

### ON MILTON

THREE poets, in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.  
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed,  
The next in majesty, in both the last:  
The force of Nature could no further go;  
To make a third, she joined the former two.

1688.

*John Dryden.*

### ON A CERTAIN LADY AT COURT

I know a thing that 's most uncommon;  
(Envy, be silent and attend!)  
I know a reasonable woman,  
Handsome and witty, yet a friend: 4

## Lines Written on a Bank-Note

Not warp'd by passion, awed by rumour;  
Not grave through pride, nor gay through  
folly;

An equal mixture of good-humour  
And sensible soft melancholy.

8

"Has she no faults then (Envy says), Sir?"

Yes, she has one, I must aver:

When all the world conspires to praise her,  
The woman's deaf, and does not hear.

12

1727.

*Alexander Pope.*

## "WHEN LOVELY WOMAN STOOPS TO FOLLY"

WHEN lovely woman stoops to folly  
And finds too late that men betray,—  
What charm can soothe her melancholy,  
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,  
To hide her shame from every eye,  
To give repentance to her lover  
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

1766.

*Oliver Goldsmith.*

## LINES WRITTEN ON A BANK- NOTE

WAE worth thy power, thou cursed leaf!  
Fell source of a' my woe and grief,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,  
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass!  
I see the children of affliction  
Unaided, through thy curs'd restriction.  
I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile  
Amid his hapless victims' spoil;  
And for thy potence vainly wish'd  
To crush the villain in the dust.  
For lack o' thee I leave this much-lov'd shore,  
Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

1814.

*Robert Burns.*

## “MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD”

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die!  
The Child is father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1802. 1807.

*William Wordsworth.*

## THE GOOD GREAT MAN

“How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits  
Honour and wealth, with all his worth and  
pains!

## Hearts-Ease

It seems a story from the world of spirits  
If any man obtain that which he merits,  
Or any merits that which he obtains. 5

---

For shame, dear friend, renounce this idle  
strain!  
What wouldst thou have a good great man  
obtain?  
Place, titles, salary, a gilded chain,  
Or throne of corses which his sword had slain?  
Greatness and goodness are not *means*, but  
*ends*. 10

Hath he not always treasures, always friends,—  
The good great man? *Three* treasures,—love,  
and light.  
And calm thoughts, regular as infant's  
breath;  
And three firm friends, more sure than day  
and night,—  
Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death. 15  
1802. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

## HEARTS-EASE

THERE is a flower I wish to wear,  
But not until first worn by you . . .  
Hearts-ease . . of all earth's flowers  
most rare;  
Bring it; and bring enough for two.  
1858. *Walter Savage Landor.*

## ABSENCE

HERE, ever since you went abroad,  
If there be change, no change I see,  
I only walk our wonted road,  
The road is only walk'd by me. 4

Yes; I forgot; a change there is—  
Was it of *that* you bade me tell?  
I catch at times, at times I miss  
The sight, the tone, I know so well. 8

Only two months since you stood here!  
Two shortest months! Then tell me  
why  
Voices are harsher than they were,  
And tears are longer ere they dry. 12

1846.

*Walter Savage Landor.*

## “PROUD WORD YOU NEVER SPOKE”

PROUD word you never spoke, but you will speak  
Four not exempt from pride some future day.  
Resting on one white hand a warm wet cheek  
Over my open volume you will say,  
“This man loved *me!*” then rise and trip  
away.

1846.

*Walter Savage Landor.*

## SEPARATION

THERE is a mountain and a wood between us,  
Where the lone shepherd and late bird  
have seen us  
Morning and noon and even-tide repass.  
Between us now the mountain and the wood  
Seem standing darker than last year they stood,  
And say we must not cross—alas! alas!

1853.

*Walter Savage Landor.*

## “ DEATH STANDS ABOVE ME ”

DEATH stands above me, whispering low  
I know not what into my ear:  
Of his strange language all I know  
Is, there is not a word of fear.

1853.

*Walter Savage Landor.*

## I WONDER NOT THAT YOUTH REMAINS ”

I WONDER not that Youth remains  
With you, wherever else she flies:  
Where could she find such fair domains,  
Where bask beneath such sunny eyes?

1853.

*Walter Savage Landor.*



## ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTH-DAY

I STROVE with none; for none was worth my  
    strife,  
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;  
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

1853.

*Walter Savage Landor.*

## FORBEARANCE

HAST thou named all the birds without a gun?  
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?  
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?  
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?  
And loved so well a high behavior,  
In man or maid, that thou from speech  
    refrained,  
Nobility more nobly to repay?  
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine!

1842.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

## DAYS

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,  
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,  
And marching single in an endless file,  
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.  
To each they offer gifts after his will,  
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds  
them all.

I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,  
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily  
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day  
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,  
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

1858.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

## THE TEST

I HUNG my verses in the wind,  
Time and tide their faults may find.  
All were winnowed through and through,  
Five lines lasted sound and true;  
Five were smelted in a pot  
Than the South more fierce and hot;  
These the siroc could not melt,  
Fire their fiercer flaming felt,

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

And the meaning was more white  
Than July's meridian light.  
Sunshine cannot bleach the snow,  
Nor time unmake what poets know.  
Have you eyes to find the five  
Which five hundred did survive?

1861.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

## FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

1869.

*Lord Tennyson.*

## “WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLE- NESS. NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING”

It fortifies my soul to know  
That, though I perish, Truth is so:  
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,  
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.  
I steadier step when I recall  
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

1862.

*Arthur Hugh Clough.*

## A CAUTION TO POETS

WHAT poets feel not, when they make  
A pleasure in creating,  
The world, in *its* turn, will not take  
Pleasure in contemplating.

1867.

*Matthew Arnold.*

## THE SKY

THE sky is a drinking-cup,  
That was overturned of old,  
And it pours in the eyes of men  
Its wine of airy gold.

We drink that wine all day,  
Till the last drop is drained up,  
And are lighted off to bed  
By the jewels in the cup!

*Richard Henry Stoddard.*

## BIRDS

BIRDS are singing round my window,  
Tunes the sweetest ever heard,  
And I hang my cage there daily,  
But I never catch a bird.

## Little Masterpieces of English Poetry

So with thoughts my brain is peopled,  
And they sing there all day long:  
But they will not fold their pinions  
In the little cage of Song!

*Richard Henry Stoddard.*

## “OUR SHARE OF NIGHT TO BEAR”

OUR share of night to bear,  
Our share of morning,  
Our blank in bliss to fill,  
Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,  
Some lose their way.  
Here a mist, and there a mist,  
Afterwards—day!

1890.

*Emily Dickinson.*

## “HEART, WE WILL FORGET HIM”

HEART, we will forget him!  
You and I to-night!  
You may forget the warmth he gave,  
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,  
That I my thoughts may dim;  
Haste! lest while you 're lagging,  
I may remember him!

1896.

*Emily Dickinson.*

## THE LAST WISH

SINCE all that I can ever do for thee  
Is to do nothing, this my prayer must be:  
That thou may'st never guess nor ever see  
The all-endured this nothing-done costs me.

1857.

*Earl of Lytton.*

## THE STIRRUP-CUP

DEATH, thou 'rt a cordial old and rare:  
Look how compounded, with what care!  
Time got his wrinkles reaping thee  
Sweet herbs from all antiquity. 4

David to thy distillage went,  
Keats, and Gotama excellent,  
Omar Khayyam, and Chaucer bright,  
And Shakespeare for a king-delight. 8

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:  
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;  
'T is thy rich stirrup-cup to me;  
I 'll drink it down right smilingly. 12

1877.

*Sidney Lanier.*









